

**The
September
2019
Issue**

**What is in
this issue:**

**School life
where we
are from
(Singapore
and
America)**

Growing up in Singapore



School Life

We have school 5 days a week, starting at 7:30am in the morning. There is a morning assembly first thing every morning, when we sing the National Anthem and recite the Pledge, while placing our right fist on our heart. We also sing the School Song once a week during morning assembly.

Did you know that the National Anthem is in Bahasa Melaya (Malay language), even though not every Singaporean speak it? This is because our national language is Malay, since the original people who lived in Singapore were Malays.

Singaporeans are bilingual, and English is our first and common language. We learn a second language at school, which we call our Mother Tongue. My Mother Tongue is Chinese, therefore I speak it fluently. I also learnt a third language during Secondary School.

During my time, we could choose from Japanese, German, French, and Malay. Can you make a guess what my choice was?

Our periods at school are an hour long, and the next class starts almost right after the previous class ends.



After School

We usually spend a lot of time and days after classes at school for our Co-Curricular Activities (CCA), like your Club Activities here. How many days a week depends on the CCA that we join. I was in my Secondary School's Rhythmic Gymnastics Team, and we trained 3 times a week for 4 hours each. We had more training sessions when competition season was near. In Junior College, I was in the Modern Dance Club, and we had practice 2 to 3 times a week, more when there was a performance or competition coming up.

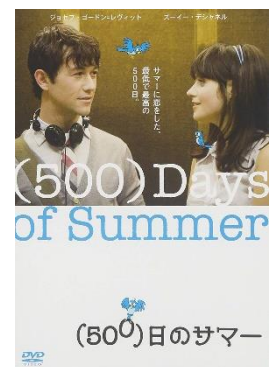


I started drinking bubble tea in 2001, and has not stopped since. I love bubble tea, it is my happy drink!



The Greatest Showman is my current favourite movie, I highly recommend it.

500 Days of Summer is one of my all time favourite movies. I really love it!



Outside of School

I guess it all depends on the individual, but I enjoyed hanging out with my friends. We would go to the movies (I have always loved watching movies at the theatre), and we would get bubble tea (what you call tapioca milk tea here) and chat endlessly. I also loved spending quality time with my family on weekends (I still do), going around to eat and laugh at silly jokes that my father and brother would make. Simple happiness is the best!

What do you like to do outside of school?

**With love,
June**



In the United States, the school year starts at the beginning of September and ends at the beginning of June. Our summer vacation is from June to August, so it is almost three months long. Winter vacation is about two weeks long at the end of December. Spring vacation in March or April is usually only about one week.

Students start school in pre-kindergarten at age four or kindergarten at age five. Elementary school continues until the fifth grade at around age ten or eleven. Middle school, or junior high school, is for three years. It is grades six, seven, and eight until around the age of fourteen. High school is four years long until about age eighteen. Ninth grade is freshman year, tenth grade is sophomore year, eleventh grade is junior year, and twelfth grade is senior year. After high school many students go to college. The U.S. has many famous colleges and universities, but they are very expensive.

U.S.A.		Age	Japan
	Preschool	2/3 – 5.	
	Kindergarten	5 – 6	Kindergarten
	1 st Grade	6 – 7	
	2 nd	7 – 8	
Elementary	3 rd	8 – 9	
	4 th	9 – 10	Elementary
	5 th	10 – 11	
K-12	6 th	11 – 12	
Middle	7 th	12 – 13	
	8 th	13 – 14	Junior High
	9 th	14 – 15	Freshman
	10 th	15 – 16	Sophomore
High	11 th	16 – 17	Junior
	12 th	17 – 18	Senior
			Senior High

The United States has a few types of schools. There is public school, private school, and homeschool. Religious schools are almost always private. Approximately 87% of American students are in public school. It is famous in American movies and television shows for yellow school buses, football teams, cheerleaders, drama clubs, and a free dress code. The schools are usually very large. Private schools are famous for school uniforms, strict rules, special campuses, new technology, and advanced academics. Approximately 10% of American students attend.

They are usually small and expensive. Only about 3% of American students are homeschooled, so it is rare. Homeschooling is famous for being very personal because parents can choose what and how to teach their child depending on state rules.



One unique thing about American schools is the school dances. Most dances are in high school. They are sometimes called "formals" because of the formal dress code. Girls usually wear long ballgowns and boys usually wear suits. Boys give girls a bracelet of flowers called a "corsage". Then girls give the boys a matching flower to put on their jacket called a "boutonnière." Some schools have Homecoming dances after the big home football game in the fall. Others have a Winter Ball around the holiday season. Some have a Sadie-Hawkins Dance where the girls ask the boys. The most famous dance is the Prom in the spring before graduation. There are many teen movies about the prom.

These dances are usually planned by a student group. They usually have themes like Old Hollywood, Casino Night, or Masquerade. There is a DJ or band, a dance floor, and snack tables. Some school dances are in the school gym but proms are usually very fancy in a hotel or even on a boat. At some schools, students vote for a Prom Queen and a Prom King for the night.



**With love,
Sheila**