



LEAVES FALL, I DON'T

**2022 FALL ZINE
YOUTH AGES 14-19**



Fall 2022 Youth Ages 14 - 19 Zine

“Be yourself. Above all, let who you are, what you are, and what you believe shine through every sentence you write, every piece you finish.”

– John Jakes

You cannot be a writer unless you see yourself as one. Each program begins with an exploration of ourselves as writers, creators, and communicators. Some work is developed by the individual, and some work is a collaborative effort.

Enjoy youth pieces from Podium partners at:

**Armstrong High School
George Wythe High School
Highland Springs High School
Huguenot High School
John Marshall High School**

Poetry and Prose

Enjoy creative poems and narrative storytelling from our high school students.

Happiness

Akeilah O.

John Marshall HS

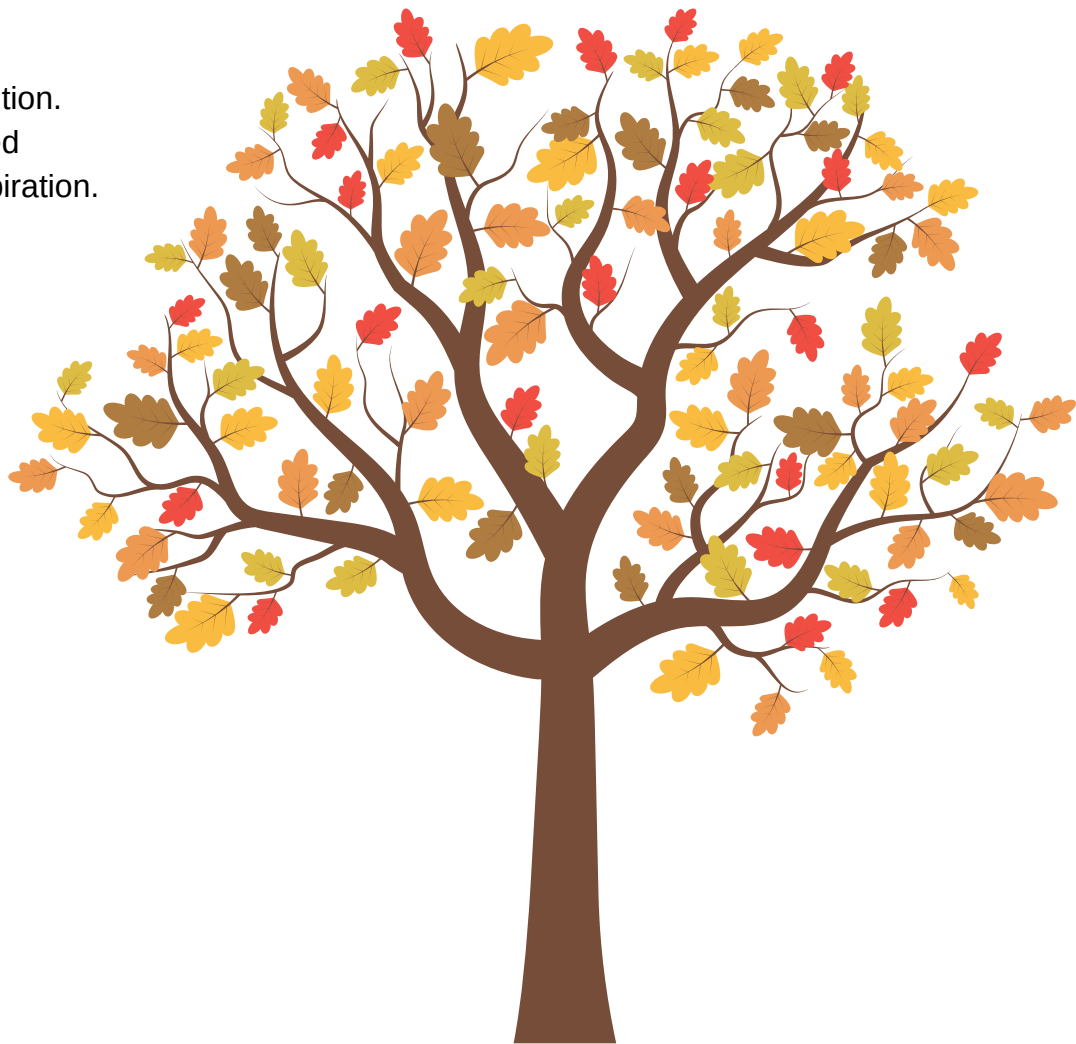
He is my peace.
Like music in my ears
It goes la-la-la-la-la.
The music makes me dance.
Dancing is my passion,
It's my way of receiving attention.
Attention makes me feel loved
So, music is my cloud of inspiration.

Soccer

Reliance N.

Highland Springs HS

Cleats on, socks on.
Step on the field.
A few jogs and stretches,
Little sweat is what I yield.
What position shall I play?
Winger or Center?
Score a few goals, and
Cheer up the defender.
Will I be happy?
I don't have to bother.
I'm with my love.
My love's name is SOCCER!



Tik Tok

**Destiny M. and Mariah H.
Huguenot HS**

We click the app when we are bored,
Our parents think they're being ignored.
In our spare time, we get on TikTok
For an hour, then two, then three on the clock.
It's full of the people we like to mock.
Now it's time to go, there's no more TikToks.

Unmotivated

**Aisha L.
John Marshall HS**

Walking in relationships is like a treadmill,
Working out but still getting no results.
Stepping on Legos hurts,
Like relationships with no emotional support.

School is depressing,
Mind scratching.
People are everywhere, and I'm
Feeling anxiety like I've never felt.

Dream, sweat dream, gone by the alarm clock.
Eventually to be woken up
With the infuriation of the need to clean
On an infinite loop.
Every time you clean,
You have to clean again
And again,
To where it becomes a dream.

After everything,
It's very unmotivating
And it makes me so, so sad.



Reluctance
Shevontae J.
George Wythe HS

In 1993, Samara got a job at the ice cream place on Serris Street. She had two friends, Lia and Amiyah, that visited her almost every shift. They'd been friends since the second grade. When a new friend, Ana, tried to come along, Samara was reluctant to let her join. She ignored her, didn't sit near her, and claimed complete ignorance to everything Ana said. After a talk with Lia and Amiyah, Samara began to acknowledge Ana and eventually befriend her. To this day, they remain lifelong friends.

Backdoor
Dephina C.
Armstrong HS

My heart is beating as fast as a car on a highway.
Why would you even think about doing that?
Why go out of your way to hurt me?
I would never do that to you.
They have to take me to the hospital now
Because my heart is winning this race.

Life
Rihanna F.
Huguenot HS

We have tomorrow before us like a flame
When I see humans, they all look lame
When people come around, I feel ashamed
When I see everybody, my love and affection don't feel the same
When I see my past life, I remember the same
How I used to see,
What I used to be,
Now, my life is the action to be.



I Am Sad
Brianna N.
George Wythe HS

I am sad because
I am failing math.
I am mad,
Like when a bull sees red.
I try and I try,
But I can only cry.
So I blast Snoop Dogg,
And I become Jolly.

This Little Boat
Tarah A.
Highland Springs HS

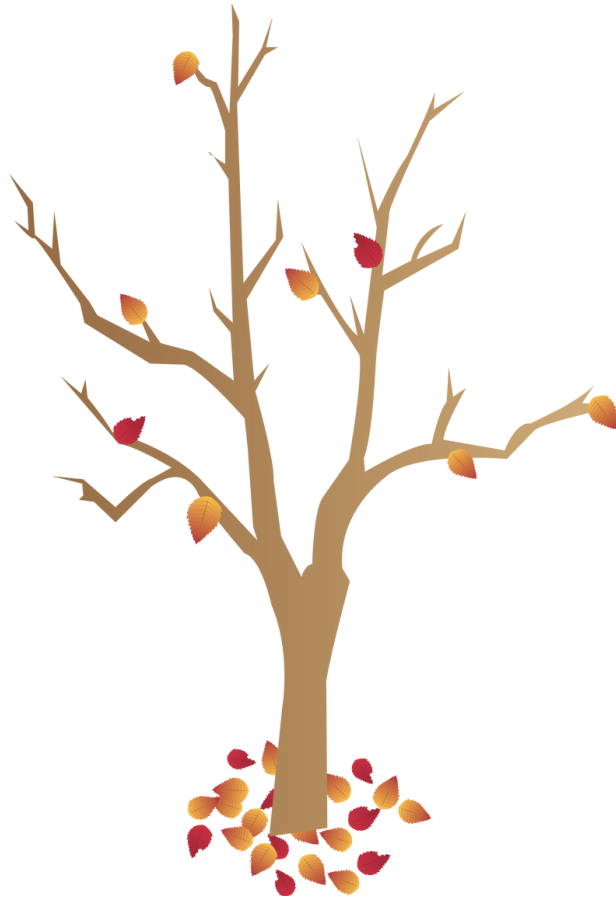
I look out the two little windows of this boat I inhabit, reflecting back on the person I've become. "Listen to me! It's better if I was here!" The voices of the memories playing over, and over, and over, AND OVER!

I put in my headphones to drown myself in music while looking at my stuffed animals. At least they understand. Staring at the object before me wondering why the life I inhabit is like this. Why do I fight with myself? Why do the people I need keep seeing the light!

It's NOT FAIR! Then my phone rang. It was the person who wants me. My best pal, someone so kind and loving! We talked the night away. I'm so glad I have him.

People
Adrianna G.
Huguenot HS

I hate people
Because they do too much.
They walk slow like turtles,
Looking at me with their owl-like eyes
And talking so dang much.



Sadness
Daveon C.
George Wythe HS

Sadness,
The heart of my soul.
Filling me up,
More than enough.



A Short Horror Story
Camryn C.
Highland Springs HS

I been living in this awful house for a few weeks. All I can hear at night are inaudible voices, creaks, whistling, knocking, and footsteps. I can never sleep! I always get asked if I ever sleep or why I have such heavy eyebags. It is soooo annoying. Lately, I have had the feeling of eyes all over me. They're only there in the dead of night. I tried to silence the noises I've been hearing, but it's nonstop!

Surprise
Shyla S.
George Wythe HS

May 2018. Rose was delighted to celebrate her three-year anniversary with her boyfriend, James. She and James were always together, but lately, he had become very distant. That didn't stop Rose from celebrating that day, and she decided that she needed to find James. She didn't text him but wanted to surprise him. As Rose searched for James, she found him with another girl. Rose confronted him, but James didn't care, and that made James realize that Rose was now the other woman.

Family
Jenee G.
Armstrong HS

I love my family,
The way they act and
The way they support me.
Even though we don't have much,
They always find a way to provide.

My grandma is as sweet as honey, and
My sister as vibrant as a spring rose.
My brother is as hyper as a hamster.
My mom, as strict and loveable as a song, while
My little sister is as unpredictable as a pimple.

Through it all, my family is still crazy
And will make you insane, but in the end,
They make my heart go boom, boom, boom.

Rebuilt
Tionna C.
Highland Springs HS

She inhaled an earthquake, and
When she tried to exhale,
She thought maybe she was the earthquake.
Buildings came crashing down inside her
Causing what she felt was destroyed,
But she realized the buildings weren't
Shattered
Just broken instead.
They can be rebuilt.
She had to learn to build, and
She struggled building.
Frustration brought her back, and
The buildings kept breaking.
But they can always be rebuilt.



Broken Heart
Devlyn C.
George Wythe HS

I miss this.
Where did it go?

You got me feeling different,
But my love never changed.
I used to play in the halls
And dance in the rain.
Now people calling me names
Because my mind's all deranged.

I want our moments,
Where did it go?
Now that you're gone
I feel like a sloth
where time's moving slow.
They say your name all the time now,
Reminiscing...

I'd gaze into your eyes, and
I can't believe it was mine.
What am I talking about?
Your hair used to get stuck in my bag,
Got me dreaming endlessly
Like a person in a coma
Hoping I'll come back.
I miss this.

Heavy Metal
Lea M.
Armstrong HS

Thrills of hearing -
The screams,
The beats,
The rhythm.
Dreams crash -
Like thunder bolts,
Like storms,
Like boom.



Speak
Sheyna E.
Highland Springs HS

The silence is deadly,
oh how I wish we'd talk.

Yet we stay silent,
as if nothing happened at all
as my tears start to fall.

I ask, are we ok?
He says we are fine
and then walks away.

As he leaves me feeling lonely,
he can hear me crying slowly.
Only then he can finally speak.



The Pebble
Naailah V.
Highland Springs HS

Through rainstorm and traffic,
through many a mile,
my pebble stayed put.
When I hold it, I smile
for it makes me remember
when we traveled so far, and my
pebble rode all the way home in our car.

My Girlfriend
Quaylah S.
George Wythe HS

My girlfriend's name is Laila.
She shines like a star.
Every time we talk, my heart melts.
Her words are so peaceful.
Every time she looks at me
My stomach gets butterflies
Sometimes I wonder, is this a dream?
Why would she pick me?
What made her pick me?
I wonder –
Is she only dating me because I'm pretty?
Is she dating me for my body?
But then I remember -
She writes me love letters.
She calls me any time,
Even when I don't reply.
She is the only girl that I can
ever dream of being with.

Bling Bling
Elijah W.
Huguenot HS

Bling, Bling.
Ching, Ching.
Money: it's going up like a bunny.
Money, money: it tastes like honey.
The dogs ate my bunny, and
My mummy is bummy, but
I really like my gummy.
My grammy got arthritis,
And I don't need no money.



Underappreciated
Quentoria C.
George Wythe HS

My life is like a spider,
Some humans don't like me,
Some do,
But it's like the humans I live with have arachnophobia.
I'm just a spider.
I try to help,
But they kill me every time.

Basketball
Dayvon B.
John Marshall HS

My IQ is brilliant,
Just like Einstein.

My sportsmanship is outstanding
Like a dog in a crowd of bears that won't hurt him.

My dedication is exceptional
Like a lion that can't stop hunting.

My position is inalienable, it can't be taken away,
Like guards in front of a castle, protecting the people.

When you have my IQ, sportsmanship, dedication, and position -
I'm the real definition of Basketball peace.

Thanks for Being You
Dominique S.
George Wythe HS

Dear Best Friend,

Thanks for being the person you are. You are the best thing that has happened to me. You make my life happy, and you are fun. Even when I'm down, you always cheer me up. Even when we're fighting, we always make up with something, whether it's going to a movie or just going outside. I'm always mad at you over the littlest things. Maybe it's because I like talking to you? You make me laugh. We joke every day, and I'm always with you. The first thing I think about is you: How are you doing? Are you mad or happy? How do you look today? Thank you for being the best person!

Love,

Dominique.

A Love Note to MoMo
Dacaijah H.
John Marshall HS

My MoMo,
My very special MoMo.

The way my fingers slide through your hair
Getting stuck like my feelings towards you.
When we go on our long walks
It makes me feel touched.

Late at night when I'm feeling sad,
Gizmo is always there for me.
I love him so much,
But he hates me with a passion.

The audacity you have – MoMo,
To love my brother more than ME!
Even though you betrayed me
I still love my dog to death.



Missing Heart
Catherine C.
George Wythe HS

I've dealt with a lot of pain, so much through my whole life. After losing my dad, I was really in my feelings because that really hurt my heart. I am so angry that it makes my mind POP, but I have to keep my feelings inside because no one listens or understands. I'm in need of help now.

Sometimes I can control my emotions, but other times I can't. It just hurts too much. It feels like I am missing something in my life and in my heart. I love my dad so much, and I miss him so much. I know he's looking down so proudly at me! He was the best dad ever –the number one dad, BOOM! Dad, I really miss you, and I wish you would come back, but I know you're in a better place.

Sleep
Aniyah R.
Armstrong HS

I sleep like a bear in hibernation,
I can sleep forever!
I sometimes smack the floor
Because I sleep like I'm in a coma,
Just like sleeping beauty.

Psychology
Taleah C.
George Wythe HS

The fuel to my heart,
The inspiration to my dreams,
The motivation it gives me to succeed in my career –
Psychology is like water to my ocean,
Helping me do what I love.



Love
Xavier R.
Armstrong HS

At first sight,
Feelings were known.
When I look at you,
I know love is true.
Every day is new,
And I truly want to say,
I really love you.

Love
Jakiyah T. and Tyajah T.
Armstrong HS

When I first saw you,
It took every ounce not to kiss you.
When I first saw you laugh,
It took every ounce of me not to fall in love with you.

Sleep
Caleb S. and Tiana F.
Armstrong HS

Sleep helps with energy.
Energy is like sugar running through my veins.
The crash hits me, boom.
I lay my head and let sleep claim me,
The cycle goes on, and on, and on....



Love

**Maliyana H.
Armstrong HS**

If I could give you one gift,
It would be the ability to see yourself through my eyes.
Only then would you realize how truly special you are.
You light up my life with every word, smile, and laugh.
You are the best thing to ever happen to me,
And I love you more.

Emotions

**Tyler J.S.
Armstrong HS**

Emotions can affect one's attitudes and make someone act without thinking. For instance, feeling really angry or depressed can make you take it out on others. Whether they deserve it or not, it is not a healthy way to act or cope. The other person's perspective, whether friend, family, or foe, can vary based on how harshly you acted. If they caused it, then they may feel guilty. If they didn't deserve it, they may feel angry at you or even sad for you for taking it out on them.

I Got Over It

**Jamari J.
Armstrong HS**

My childhood was like living in hell.
I got did in the worst way
By my family.
I learned to get over it,
But I still have flashbacks.
It made me feel scared
At first, but now,
I use it to fuel my rage.



Use Your Voice!

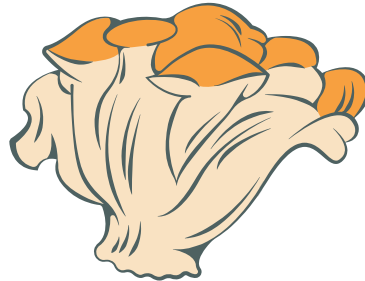
Student reflections on what they would like to see changed in the world.

Driving

Jovan B.

Armstrong HS

What I want to change is allowing teens to drive at age 14 or 15! It affects me because I need to drive to school, home, and I need go to other places in the US. I would drive every day. A solution is for me to go to driving school and ask them to give me my driver's license.

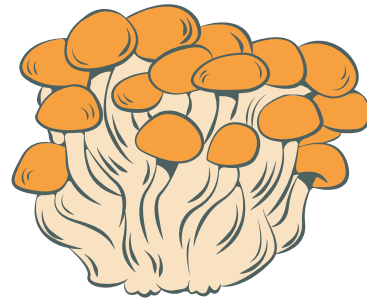


Media Records

Devlyn C.

George Wythe HS

People in our society are always talking about death and how it is, but they're always the ones who are recording instead of helping. This literally helps nothing. People would rather see people dying than to help them. The person that's lying there in pain is probably a little mad because you're recording them dying. You could be helping people, but instead, you'd rather put their deaths on social media.



Tolerance

Kadyn G.

Highland Springs HS

Sometimes tolerance can be a bad thing, like people doing the bare minimum for something. In some settings, being tolerant can be kind of rude in a way. It all depends on the settings and situations that you're in. But on the other hand, tolerance can also be a good thing. I try and have a lot of tolerance at school, especially in the hallways and in my classes. I think in settings like that, it's okay and sometimes good to be tolerant with the people around you and the work that been given to you.



Change the Law
Jomauri D.H.
Armstrong HS

I want to change the community. I don't like how you can just walk outside and get shot at. We can get rid of guns. I also don't like racist cops and people. If someone is being racist, I think you should get to slap them, and they can't hit you back. I don't think there is a law against racism, so let's change the laws.



School Rules
Christopher Smith
George Wythe HS

Let's change the school rules. It's crazy that a school up the street has a 90% graduation rate while we only have a 50% graduation rate. If you fight, you should get expelled. No mercy. If that happened, all the problems would go away. We should make rules on violence more extreme.

Let's Celebrate Pride
Sierra M.
Highland Springs HS

I want society to accept LGBTQ+ people because they can change the world. June is Pride month where LGBTQ+ people can celebrate their pride. My pride shows that I'm pansexual. Movies are banned in some countries due to LGBTQ+ parts in them, which makes me mad because it's disrespectful to the LGBTQ+ community. People don't know about them, so I want the world to know that LGBTQ+ people can change the world.

For pride month, schools should teach people about how the LGBTQ+ community can change the world and make a difference. They mean something to us. Celebrating them helps everyone know what they can do. We can all bring acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community. We all belong to the world, and together, we can help make the world an accepting, better place filled with peace and harmony. We can all make a difference. We know we can, and we will do it.

Post Positive
Tamira J.
Armstrong HS

I want to change what people post on Instagram, such as drama. The drama that people post on Instagram affects the people who are involved in the drama and everyone it is about. That's how fights happen. A solution could be that people can post more positive things, like posting stuff about animals.

Lame
Zion L.
Armstrong HS

I would say it's between Kanye West and TikTok as a platform. Kanye has a negative impact in today's world, but he used to have a positive impact, especially with his music. TikTok has both a negative and positive influences, it all depends on what you see. Some videos are very educational, while others can be false and misleading. A very small group of videos are grown people arguing with children or other grown people. It is absurdly idiotic, in my opinion, because this mostly results in unnecessary violence where kids then see it. They feel that it is acceptable, and so in turn, the new generation isn't trying to be sensible and educated because it's labeled as "lame."

Society
Anonymous
George Wythe HS

I would like to change
the way society acts.
They act how they want to be seen
instead of how they need to be viewed.
It affects younger generations:
their behavior shapes
the younger generation.
Try to convince society
for us to be better.
They need to change
how they act
and to view things differently.

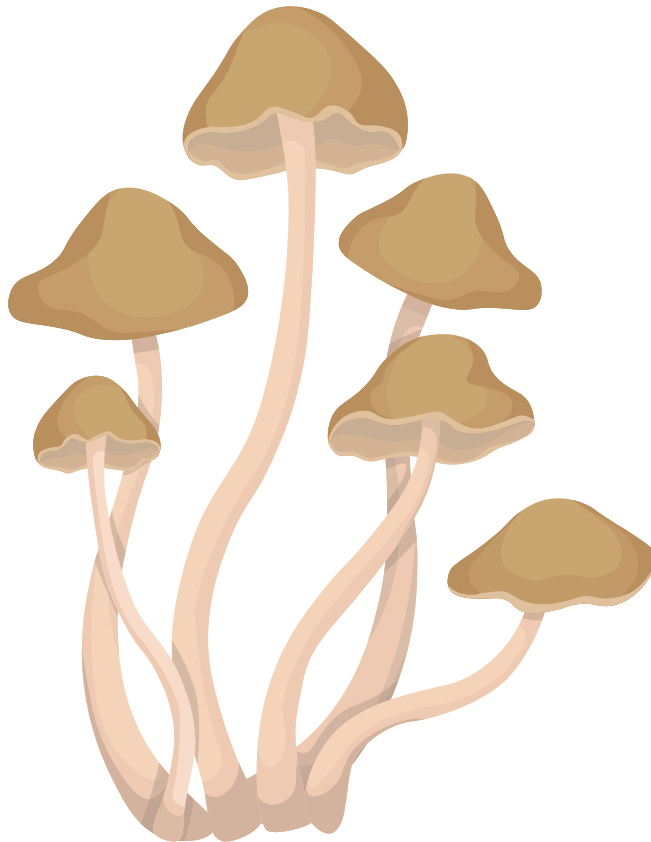


Safer Music
Zion L.
Armstrong HS

One thing I would like to change is the amount of senseless violence going on in the world. This affects a lot of small communities as well as the hip-hop scene. Many people have died simply for making music.

Stop Sharing the Hurt
Laron T.
Armstrong HS

I am passionate about Instagram because it has a lot of drama and fights on it. It also has videos of kids trying to harm themselves and people trying to hurt others. That's why I am passionate about Instagram. There is a solution to stopping the hurt. It is by stopping people from sharing information about violence and stopping the sharing of videos of people trying to hurt themselves or someone else.



Life Lessons, Bad Days, and Reflections

Dear Future Me
Shevontae J.
George Wythe HS

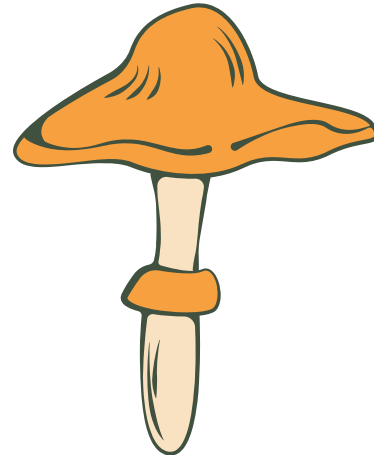
Dear future me,

Your handwriting should be better than this. Stop cracking your knuckles! I hope everything's well. I don't want to know what's happening. Don't tell me either!

I hope you did good in Spanish and that you passed your geometry SOL. I believe in you. But I guess it doesn't matter now. Make sure to tell Ma that you love her. I will. I don't know what else to say except that I hope you're well. Do better than me. Don't lose hope. Live. Love. Laugh.

-Past Shevontae

PS: Do your homework!



Shouldn't Have Said
Carmen I.
Highland Springs HS

My best friend and I got into an argument, and we said words that we shouldn't have said. We stopped talking for a couple days. One day, she texted me and told me what she was going through and why she was acting the way she was, then I told her what I was going through for me to say the things I was saying. I thought about all the things we said to each other, and I felt bad because she was going through a lot, and the things I said made her feel upset.

Everyone Has a Due Date
Jadon M.
Armstrong HS

I learned to accept my great-grandma's passing, and now my nana and I celebrate that she lived a good life. I had to learn that death isn't so bad, and that everyone has a due date. I have accepted it and now celebrate my great grandma.

Broken
Jamesha H.
George Wythe HS

I'm hurting,
Screaming HELP ME,
But no one's listening.
I'm in a loophole,
My mind is a running train
Boom AGH, AGH.
Instead of crying, I laugh.
What's the point of life?
I hate feeling empty.



More Than Likely
Ka'Lyse H.
George Wythe HS

I don't remember a time when I had a bad day, but when I get mad, I take my anger out on anyone and everything. I know it's wrong because the other people don't do anything for me to react that way. More than likely, they feel confused, upset, and mad.

Bad Days, Good Days
Camryn C.
Highland Springs HS

My bad day is right now. I want to go home as soon as possible but I have a parent-teacher conference (UNFORTUNATELY). I don't want to be here. I have bad days when I get up too overstimulated (like now). Sometimes, I want to go to sleep and forget the world is here. I just hate the sound of people always talking unless you're speaking for me.

I also have my good days, mainly because I have good times with my friends at school or my family. My good days consist of lots of things and listening to music is one of them. Also, cold air makes me really happy.

Dear Dad
Aniyah C. H.
George Wythe HS

Dear Dad,

Thank you for being here for me. Thank you for watching over me while you're in heaven, doing what's right. I really appreciate you for doing what you do. I look up to you because I know you want me to be happy and doing my best, so I do things for you.

Love,

Aniyah



Breakup
Tyajah T.
Armstrong HS

One time I had a bad day was when my girlfriend and I broke up, and I ended up taking it out on my friend. Then, my girlfriend and I talked everything out. The next day I saw my friend. I talked to her and told her I was sorry about what happened. My girlfriend was sad and mad about us breaking up.

Dear You
E'macio J.
George Wythe HS

Dear You,

You're inspiring. You're caring. You're lovable. I thank you for bringing me into this world. I thank you for giving me something I can never repay, and that's life. I can't promise I'll repay it back, but I can promise I'll do something with it.

Love,

Me

Bad Day
Laron T.
Armstrong HS

A time I had a bad day was two days ago when I got woken up early by my mom to take my brother to the bus stop. I took it out on my brother, but I didn't mean to. When I took my anger out on my brother, I think he felt sad, and we both knew it wasn't his fault.

Dear Madison
Mariah C.C
George Wythe HS

Dear Madison,

You were the first person to ever see me for me. You were my first-ever best friend to help me when I needed it the most. I never knew you were going to be my best friend when you came up to me on my first day at school, asking if I was going to come to a party. You are literally my biggest blessing, and I love you. I'm sorry for not being the best, best friend, but I will make up for it. Thank you for sticking by me no matter what. I love you from even 370 miles away!

Sincerely,

Mariah

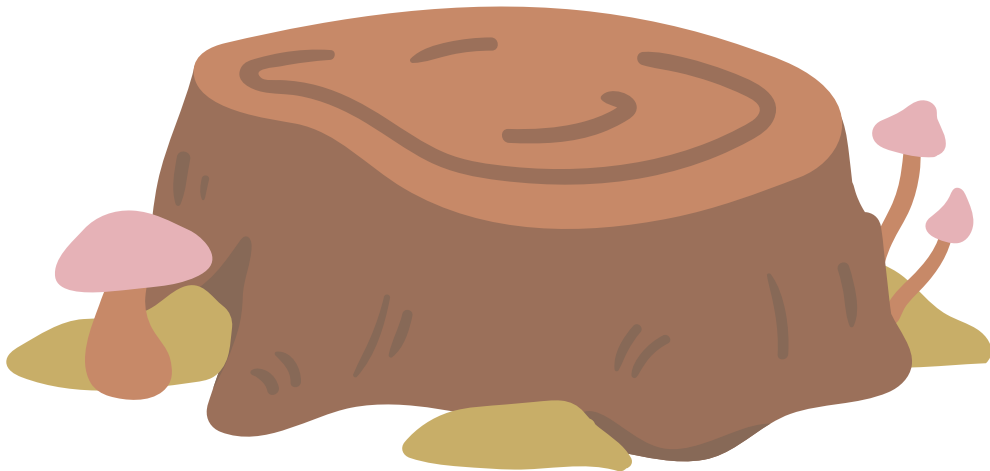


Bad Day
Najah W.
Armstrong HS

I once yelled at my mom because I was frustrated with my misplacement of something. I had yelled and gave her attitude, and she definitely didn't deserve it. What happened from her perspective was that she asked me a question, and I responded in a negative tone. She was most likely feeling annoyed and disrespected. If I was her, I would have shut me down and asked what was wrong.

Bad Day Last Year
Briana J.
Highland Springs HS

Sometime last year, I had a bad day when I got an attitude. This boy said something to me that made me mad. I started going off, not realizing if what I was saying was rude or more. He did not really say anything back, and he might've thought I was doing too much, but I didn't care. I was just really upset, and when I get really upset, it's kind of hard to calm me down. I was not really caring how he felt at that moment. Maybe I was wrong, but at the end of the day, he shouldn't have said anything to me! I kind-of felt bad because he could've been having a bad day. Snapping at people is not the best thing to do.





I Podium

@PODIUMRVA