

NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL MATHROVER ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

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Welcome back to the second issue of the MathRover English newsletter! As mentioned in the last release, this is a monthly newsletter that will be put out at the beginning of every month. There will be a different group of MathRover students working on each month's article, the ones for this month being Adila, Daniel, Mingrui, and Simin. They have each put in time and effort to write unique articles that will hopefully be of interest to you. We hope you enjoy!

The History of Time

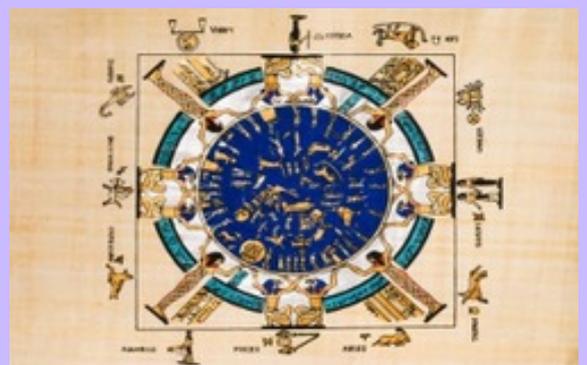
Written by Mingrui

In this day and age, we rely on calendars on a daily basis. Despite this, the modern calendar is often taken for granted as we live in ignorance of the rich history behind these seemingly mundane objects.

In ancient times, people placed special importance on the documentation of the passage of time, as they needed to know when to plant and harvest crops. Prehistoric societies would have monitored when certain plants first sprouted, but as civilizations grew, mankind began to use the stars. Many civilizations used the moon to count the months that make up the year, such as the Sumerian calendar from Ancient Mesopotamia, which had 12 months (totaling 354 days). Evidently, this is short of the length of an actual year, as defined as one revolution around the sun, which is around 365.25

days; for this reason, the Sumerians would add in a leap month every now and then.

Meanwhile, the Ancient Egyptians would use a solar calendar, which measures a year through the Sun's position in the sky. They did this by observing the star Sirius — whose appearance on the horizon roughly coincided with the flooding of the Nile — and calculated the length of a year as 365 days. The difference of a quarter day per year means that, over time, the Egyptian calendar would slip behind the actual lengths of years. Instead of adding leap years, the Egyptians just let the calendar drift behind so that it would take 1460 years for the appearance of Sirius to once again correspond to its original spot on the calendar.



An Ancient Egyptian Calendar

The History of Time

Continued . . .

By the time of the Romans, it was known that a year's length was roughly 365.25 days, and when Julius Caesar came to power, he decided to clean up the existing Roman calendar, which still required people to insert extra months from time to time to make sure the calendar did not fall behind. Caesar ensured this new calendar would be able to run without human intervention through the usage of leap years: an extra day in a year, added every four years to accommodate the extra quarter day . This calendar is known as the Julian calendar, and it would serve as the basis for our modern calendar. However once again, imprecise measurements of the year would necessitate further adjustments.

The length of a year is close to 365.25 days, but not quite, which means the Julian calendar

deviates a day every 128 years. This calendar was in place for over 1,600 years, so you can see how these small errors can add up. This problem was brought up in the Catholic Church, and in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII decreed the new Gregorian calendar, which is the calendar we continue to use today. The Gregorian calendar was pushed ten days ahead of the Julian calendar, so that October 4th was followed by October 15th in 1582. Additionally, years divisible by 100 are now not leap years even though they are divisible by 4, unless the year is also divisible by 400 (so the year 1900 is not a leap year but the year 2000 is). At first, only the Catholic countries in Europe adopted the new calendar, as the continent was deeply divided by the Reformation, but slowly, Protestant countries adopted it too. Great Britain and its colonies began utilizing the Gregorian calendar in 1752, and the last European country to make the switch was Greece, in 1923.

One Summer's Day

Written by Daniel

This summer, on an August afternoon, I went fishing at Murphy's Point, an enormous, labyrinth-like lake three hours away from Toronto, or about ninety minutes from Ottawa. It took a bit less than twenty minutes to leave the shore and set up. To get to the place with thriving fish, you must take a boat, but motorized boats weren't allowed. I went with my family, my cousin and my aunt. My cousin used a kayak, while everybody else used the same canoe to slowly get there. There were many waves and rocks. After a bit of effort, we finally got to our destination after thirty minutes of rowing.



Getting from one side to another, you will pass by a few campsites by the edge. After rowing for a long time, we drifted under a small bridge leading closer to another section of the lake. After a bit more boating, we stopped by a clearing by a rock where my father, sister and cousin stopped paddling to relax. After making sure we had what we needed, we set out into the middle of the lake to fish. After that, we headed out to fish on the boat. We used small fake leeches as bait. Because we were using a boat, we could just drop the line straight under the boat to catch fish. We caught many types of fish including rockbass, sunfish, largemouth bass, and even a pike. We ended up with more than fifteen fish after half an hour of fishing, but we only kept a few. On the way back, the trip was easier, as we were going with the current. A bit before we were back to shore, I caught a tiny perch by some lily pads. I really enjoyed the experience of boating and fishing, and after a tiring but fun day, I slept like a sloth.

The Blessing of Misery

Written by Adila

In the minds of many, the concept of utopia stands as the ultimate ideal. It is a term that was first coined by Sir Thomas More, describing a community that can provide more than enough for its residents to allow them to lead a sustainable life — a place that has achieved lasting peace and happiness among the population. In other words, it is the epitome of societal development, where all contributors remain constant and unchanging. That being said, it is near certain that the world we live in will never be able to attain this utopic perfection, which you may soon find is actually a preferable conclusion.

Imagine never having to work a day in your life, living without any responsibility or risk of danger. You will always have a roof over your head, food on the table, and a general sense of happiness with the situation you are in.

But... if you've never experienced sadness or suffering, how would you know that you are truly happy? Without the contrast of cold and darkness, will light and warmth really hold much value? In a world where **everything** matters, will you be able to find a meaning to your existence? In utopia, you will have everything you want and so will everyone around you. Ultimately, you will find that, when your environment leaves no more to be desired, the only thing you will want would be the want to want something or to be wanted by others; the desire to desire.

The idea of utopia suggests that we humans are the ideal leaders of the world, free of mistakes and illogical impulses. Because our species simply can't meet this requirement, it is inevitable that a utopic way of life would not suit us. So rather than aim for this flawed perfection, why don't we just appreciate life as it is? With all its ups and downs, joys and sufferings, but most importantly, the blessing of misery. After all, it is only in the darkest of nights when you can see the brightest stars.

Some of humanity's darkest, cruelest, and most inhumane moments are kept alive through history — World War II being one of them. Think about the second world war. What is the first thing that comes to mind? Perhaps feelings of hatred, distress, or hostility towards certain groups. Others may feel sadness or despair from the memory of lost ones or personal experiences. To really know what happened, you have to start from the beginning to understand the end.

After the first World War, Italy, who stood victorious, was extremely disappointed with the amount of land they were given. They expected a lot, considering the price they paid, but in reality, they were only given a small portion. Benito Mussolini, a former socialist, who previously conducted many protests against the war, had a change of heart and was dismissed by the socialist party for his opposing views. As such, Mussolini decided it was time for a new party, one which shared the same views as him.

World War II

Written by Simin

This was how the Fascist Party was created, with Mussolini as Europe's first Fascist leader.

Meanwhile in Germany, many felt humiliated from the first World War and wanted revenge, with the Treaty of Versailles acting as a constant reminder of their failure. On top of that, the government's poor handling of the situation pushed the country's economy to ruin. Adolf Hitler was a man who took advantage of this and claimed that he had the solutions to fix everything using his fascism ideals; the majority of people supported him. In 1920, the Facist party was renamed to the National-Socialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartie, currently better-known as the "Nazi" party.

Hitler believed that there was a "natural order" for people on the Earth. He believed that "pure" Germans were superior while

Jewish people were the “lowest” or the “worst”. Hitler did not want Jews to “taint” Germany’s “racial purity”; as such, Germany captured many Jews and sent them to death camps. Over the course of 4 years, more than 6 million Jews died, but they were not only the only targets. Anyone who had a different religion, race, or political view was also subject to these horrors.

At the Potsdam Conference of July-August 1945, U.S. President Harry S. Truman, Churchill and Stalin discussed the current war with Japan, as well as the peace settlement with Germany. Post-war Germany was divided into four occupation zones, which were controlled by the Soviet Union, Britain, the United States and France. Churchill and Truman permitted Stalin, as they needed the Soviet Union to cooperate to win the war against Japan. Heavy casualties sustained in the campaigns at Iwo Jima (February 1945) and Okinawa (April-June 1945), coupled with the fears of an even costlier

World War II

Continued . . .

land invasion from Japan led Truman to authorize the use of a new and devastating weapon: the atomic bomb. It was unleashed on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August, prompting the Japanese government to issue a statement declaring they would accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration in mid-August. On September 2nd, U.S. General Douglas MacArthur accepted Japan’s formal surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

History can be a beautiful yet dangerous thing. It can teach us about the past and sometimes even prepare us for the future.

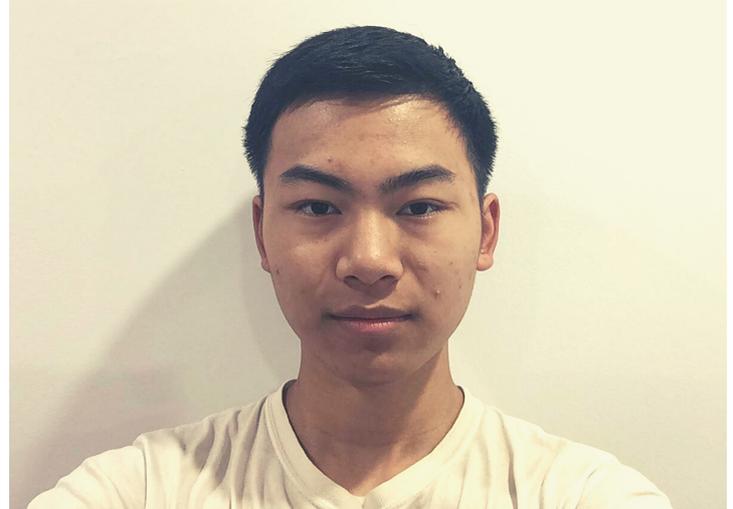
We will acknowledge and learn from the mistakes of those before us, the suffering and the lives lost. However, for the sake of our future, we will never again repeat the horrific acts that took place back then; not now, not ever.

About the Creators



**Adila - Group Leader,
Designer, Writer**

I am in grade 10 and I like to draw, watch anime, and read about philosophical concepts.



Mingrui - Writer

I am in grade 11, I like potatoes (any style), historical/sci-fi movies, and piano music. I read in my spare time.



Daniel - Writer

I am in grade 7. I like to play video games, fish, and play basketball. I usually play video games or read in my spare time.



Simin - Writer

I'm in grade 10. I really enjoy art, bullet journaling and watching anime. In my spare time, I like to put on some music or an anime and draw or journal.