

Pregnancy: the
first trimester

Cause: Veterans
Airlift Command

The debate over
forced vaccination

Cover photo
by **Mel**

Aug 2009
TeenHelp.org's eZine
Volume 3,
Issue 2

Avatar

School and College: Being Prepared
Tips for success when going back to school or starting somewhere new.



Table of Contents

4

TeenHelp Times

Violence and turmoil in Iran and the capital of Xianjiang province: Urmuqi, China.

6

Immunizations

by Maria (Gidig)

Immunizations and the debate over forced vaccination.

7

Stages of Pregnancy

by Kathy (drowningangel)

You and your pregnancy: The first trimester.

9

Cause: Veterans Air-lift Command

by Katrina

Helping soldiers to obtain sufficient health care.

10

Dear Avatar

The Editors respond to requests for advice from users like you!

11

School and College: Being Prepared

by Jessie and Katrina

Some tips for success!

13

TeenHelp's Top Ten Roller Coasters

by Nat (Strider)

Ten of the world's best rides.

15

Puzzle: Shikaku

by Jessie

Learn to play and try your hand at this puzzle game!

16

Self Expression

Expressing life through your fingertips: poetry, quotes, and photography.

17

Horoscopes

by Katrina

August's sign: Leo. Rawr!

Also

- 3 **Editors' Letter**
- 3 **Contributors**
- 18 **The Wind Down**

Contact

Your valuable contributions are what make Avatar so unique. Please submit us your content, whether it be an article, poem, joke, game, photo, drawing or anything else you have to share!

Avatar submission form: www.teenhelp.org/submit
Email: avatar@teenhelp.org



Letter from the Editors

Hey TeenHelp, welcome to the August 2009 Issue of Avatar!

This month we have some awesome content for you. In the Teen-Help Times you'll find a heartfelt dedication to Neda Agha-Soltan, a young woman whose life was lost during the Iranian Presidential election protests, as well as an informative piece on recent riots in Urmuqi, China.

In the Mind & Body section we have an enlightening article on immunizations and take an educational look at the first trimester of pregnancy. Don't forget to check out TeenHelp's cause of the month for August, The Veterans Airlift Command. Also this month, in Lifestyle and in honor of the upcoming back-to-school season, be on the lookout for some school preparation advice from the editors!

For more lighthearted content, read Fun & Games where you'll find a puzzle game as well as TeenHelp's August "Top Tens," a compilation of ten of the world's greatest roller coasters. As always, don't forget to check out the Self Expression and Horoscopes sections!

Until next month,
The Avatar Editors.

Editors

Editor-in-Chief

Mel

Content Editor

Katrina

Graphics Editor

Jessie

Sub-Editor of News and Debates

Mai (sushi_error)

Sub-Editor of Mind and Body

Maria (Gidig)

Sub-Editor of Lifestyle

Nat (Strider)

Contributors

The Avatar Editors would like to thank the following Teen-Help users for their vaulable contributions published in this month's magazine.

Contributions from readers like you are what make Avatar so unique and wonderful. Please consider submitting content, whether it be an article, poem, photograph, or anything else, to an Avatar Editor or by emailing us at avatar@teenhelp.org.

Articles

Jamie

Kathy (drowningangel)

Images

Adam

Ricardo (Shish)

Self Expression

Casey

Mary (x_muse)



Neda: A Symbol of Freedom

by Mai (sushi_error)

On July 20th, 2009, 26 year-old Neda Agha-Soltan was participating in a peaceful protest against the Iranian election when she was killed by a single bullet. Within hours of her murder, images and videos of her last moments spread across the internet. She instantly became a symbol for democracy and freedom in the eyes of millions of Iranians around the world.

Dear Neda,

As a video of your final moments flashed onto my television screen, I quickly changed the channel. I could neither bear to see you take your last breaths nor close your eyes for eternity, knowing that your death was nothing but a senseless murder. A day or two after your death, I began to learn about your life. You were a talented and aspiring musician, waiting for your big break. You had been bitten by the travel bug early and journeyed to Thailand, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. You were well-versed in other languages (like Turkish) and almost ready to settle down with your fiancé. You were a daughter, a sister, and a friend. To each of those individuals, you were a passionate and loving human being. You loved your heritage and culture, but yearned to see the world for yourself. However, as the announcement of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's victory spread across Iran and the world, you immediately knew something was not right. You marched alongside thousands of your fellow Iranians, voicing your opposition and preaching freedom and democracy. Before you knew it, your life came to an abrupt end as a single sniper bullet penetrated your chest.

“Every time I turn on the news or surf the internet, I come across stories of individuals like you, struggling for freedom and democracy across the world.”

In a country where intangibles such as freedom and democracy are nonexistent, you defied laws in order to achieve freedom. Your immense courage and sacrifice will always live on in the hearts of billions of people across the world. You have become a rallying cry for millions of Iranians in Iran and across the world. You have instilled a greater and deeper desire for freedom and democracy in individuals of all backgrounds. There is no doubt in my



mind that your fellow Iranians will continue to fight until there is complete freedom and peace in your beautiful nation. The fact that the Iranian government has prohibited any references to your death is a testament of their wrongdoings. They can try to prevent protests as much as they please, but they cannot silence the voices of millions.

Every time I turn on the news or surf the internet, I come across stories of individuals like you, struggling for freedom and democracy across the world. I realize how lucky I am to have my vote count, my voice heard in American elections. I did not vote in the recent U.S. Presidential Election due to age, but I had the opportunity to throw out my support for my favorite candidate in other ways. Police officers did not barge into my home and arrest me for standing behind my beliefs. I was not blocked from websites like Facebook whenever I wanted to voice my opinions on various issues. I cannot think of another country where a presidential election is not met with bloodshed or violence, besides the United States and one or two other nations. Our elections can be long and agonizing, but are fair and just.

Through your great sacrifice, you have united those who were divided before and have become a reason why freedom should never be taken for granted. It is difficult to guess the final chapter of this unscripted reality, but hopefully, Iran will finally taste the freedom it has been longing for over thirty years.

Rest in peace, Neda. Your dream will never die. ■



Urumqi Erupts

by Jamie

One of the more important events of the month, possibly the year, are the riots in the capital of Xianjiang province, Urumqi. Although the riots seem to have eluded the glare of the media recently and are nearly not as well known or protested over as Tibet, the riots between the ethnic Uighurs—a Muslim community who has lived in the area under Chinese occupation for hundreds of years since the Qing dynasty and the Han Chinese*—reached a critical mass leaving over a hundred people dead, causing smaller uprisings across Xianjiang province, and requiring the Beijing government to send in the army to quell the situation.

It was caused by the eventual boiling over of underlying tensions between the Uighurs and Chinese that had been threatening to erupt since recent times. As Urumqi has become more industrial, there has been an influx of Han Chinese workers to what was a mostly Uighur town, so they have felt like their way of life is threatened as well as a feeling that, economically, the Han Chinese reap far more benefit. This spilled over earlier in the year with an incident that saw two Uighur men killed after false allegations of alleged sexual assault against a Han Chinese woman. This caused major unrest within the Uighur community, which had been building—not just as the loss of life but the anger at how the Beijing government handled the situation, despite arrests of those who started the false allegations. This turned out to be the final straw that led to the disturbances in Urumqi.

“...torching cars, attacking both the police and citizens in a rampage that left over 1,000 hurt and 156 dead.”

On July the 5th, this boiled over into full-scale rioting. It is rare to see any type of rioting in the country, so the news that riots were occurring certainly came as a surprise, most of all to Chinese Premier Hu Jintao who had to return from the G8 meeting in L'Aquila to handle the situation. However, one thing in common with most disturbances in China is that the government has kept a tight rein on the media, shutting down phones as well as internet in the Xianjiang province. Because of this the details are sketchy, but this does not mean we should immediately disregard an official version of what occurred.

According to various reports, the unrest initially started out as a peaceful protest against the murders of Uighurs. However, they were angrily confronted by Chinese police as well as local Han Chinese. This turned out to be the spark for the ensuing rioting. The crowd swelled and it was the Uighurs who caused nearly all the destruction and damage, torching cars, attacking both the police and citizens in a rampage that left over 1,000 hurt



and 156 dead. Most of the dead are Han Chinese, with only a handful Uighur, most likely killed by the Chinese police. However, the deadly force may have been acceptable and internationally there is surprise that the Chinese have remained fairly restrained by their standards. It has calmed since then, although there have been (mostly peaceful) protests from both the Han Chinese and Urumqi population. There have also been widespread arrests, but nothing on the scale of those in Tibet.

It may signify a hopeful seed of a more merciful approach from the Chinese across their nation; only time will tell. For now though, we can only hope that there is not a flare up of violence again in Urumqi and that no more lives lost. ■

**For the purposes of this article, Han Chinese refers to a typical Chinese Citizen, but they are referred to as Han Chinese to differentiate from the Uighurs, who despite their Muslim heritage are also Chinese.*



Immunizations

by Maria (Gidig)

We've all heard of immunizations, vaccinations, or just plain old "shots" from the doctor. It's almost every kid's worst nightmare—going to the doctor to get a needle poked into your arm. That doesn't sound all that fun, even for adults. However, vaccines are seen as the one of the most successful medical advancements in history. Why is this, and how do they work? Furthermore, should you have a choice in whether to be vaccinated or not?

In 1796, a physician named Edward Jenner decided to prove a theory he'd been hearing about for quite a while.

"Vacca" is the latin term for cow, so the term "vaccination" is actually named after cowpox.

Smallpox, at this point, had killed many people worldwide. Cowpox, which is less serious than smallpox, is a disease comparable to smallpox. Jenner noticed that once a cow recovered from cowpox it became immune to the disease, meaning even when exposed it would not catch the disease again. He tested this theory on a boy by exposing him to cowpox and, after he recovered, to smallpox through injection. It worked!

There are four basic steps to how the vaccination works. First, and most obviously, you administer the vaccination through an injection. Next, your body realizes that the injection contains foreign substances or antigens. Your body then proceeds to create antibodies to fight off the foreign substance or disease you were "infected" with when you received the injection. Finally, your body saves these antibodies, in case it needs to fight off the same substance again.

There is a downside. Antibodies for one disease, like chicken pox, can only fight off that one disease. Having antibodies for chicken pox does not mean you're immune from smallpox, and this means that for every disease a person wants to be immunized to they must get a new vaccination.

It is important to remember that doctors don't fully infect you with a disease when giving you an immunization. You will only be injected with enough of

the disease for your body to create the necessary antibodies, without actually catching the disease.

The Great Vaccination Debate: There are many arguments for and against vaccinations, particularly on the subject of forcing parents to vaccinate their children. There are people who don't want their children vaccinated but may be putting their children at risk. Should they still have this choice? There are two sides to the argument.

You will run across many people who believe parents should be forced to vaccinate their children. In failing to get a child vaccinated, a parent is putting them at risk for multiple diseases. And they are not only affecting one person's health in choosing not to have his or her child vaccinated. Should their child fall ill and carry the disease to school, the store, or the playground, there is a chance that more children will catch the disease.

Many people argue that by failing to have your child vaccinated you are simply asking for them to get various illnesses. Why not prevent something that is so easily preventable?



Some parents believe that their child may get autism or other life-changing disorders from immunizations. There is, however, no proven link between the two, and these cases are extremely rare.

(continued on page 7)



Some will say the risk of vaccinations is too great to leave this choice up to the government. These people believe that parents should not be forced to vaccinate their children. They support their arguments using cases where autism may be related to a cocktail of injections, however it remains that there is currently no proven connection. To some people, however, the risk is not worth the potential negative effects.

Many people also take religious beliefs into account and say that you should not interfere with the course of God or another higher power. These people argue that parent's should have the right to chose to vaccinate their children.

Opinions from the Author: Personally, I believe it should be a choice. As someone afraid of needles myself, there have been times where I've researched a vaccination to decide if it was in my, and everyone around me, best interest to go through the emotional stress of getting a vaccination. Sometimes it is, and sometimes it isn't. However, my parents and I should have the right to make that choice. I believe people who say they won't get their children vaccinated because of fear of autism or another incurable disability should research the vaccine, and then look at options to lessen that chance. For example, getting only one immunization at a time is said to lower the risk of adverse affects. In my opinion, decisions are good, as long as they're made with educational backing. ■

Contact us!

Do you have any comments or feedback on any of our featured Mind and Body articles? Would you like to see one of your articles here or do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

Submission form: www.teenhelp.org/submit
Email: avatar@teenhelp.org

The Stages of Pregnancy: First Trimester

by Kathy (drowningangel)

When you find out you're pregnant, you may be uncertain of what to expect in the months to come. While your pregnancy will certainly be overwhelming at times, the following collaboration will hopefully help you to understand what is happening to you and your baby.

First Trimester. The first trimester of pregnancy lasts from conception to 3 months (0-12 weeks). The embryo will reach the size of a kidney bean, begin developing fingers and toes, and fingerprints by the end of the third month. Your body will also go through several changes, and while some women may experience all of the "typical" pregnancy symptoms, others will experience none. The moment you discover you're pregnant, you should begin to see an obstetrician/midwife and take prenatal care vitamins.

Missed Period. One of the most recognized signs of early pregnancy is a missed period. While some females may have periods sporadically throughout their pregnancy, any bleeding should be investigated by your doctor for any possible complications during pregnancy. Some women having spotting (a light period) assume they can't be pregnant, and begin experiencing symptoms before they are aware of their pregnancy.

Breast Changes. As early as the first trimester, the mammary glands of the breasts will begin to swell, due to an increase in estrogen and progesterone hormones. This is due to the breasts preparing to produce breast milk for the coming child. The areolas (pigmented ring surrounding the nipples) can darken or change in color and have tiny bumps that appear (Montgomery's Tubercles – enlarged sweat glands). Sensitivity and tenderness of the breasts is not uncommon but should not last past the third or fourth month. (Tip: A supportive bra should be worn to minimize stretching of the breast tissue.)

Tiredness/Fatigue. Exhaustion is a common complaint for women throughout pregnancy. This is the body's way of telling you to get more rest. In addition to the recommended eight hours of sleep at night, you should also take short naps during the day as needed. However, too much rest can actually worsen your fatigue, so consider a walk or even yoga.

(continued on page 8)



Something for the heart and soul.

Sleeping on the left side increases blood flow to the fetus and may be more comfortable for some mothers. Also, a body pillow can help you to rest easier. You may want to work less until you determine what works for you and adjust to your changing body. You can always increase your hours, later. Always make sure to get the vitamins you need; without them, you may become more fatigued.

Nausea and Vomiting. Besides missing a period, nausea and vomiting is one of the most commonly identified signs of pregnancy; over half of pregnant women experience this symptom. The stretching of the uterine muscles, an enhanced sense of smell, and an increase in hormones can all cause "morning sickness." Don't be fooled, though--this "morning sickness" can occur throughout the day.

Losing some weight during the first trimester due to morning sickness is not unusual. Simply make sure you see your caregiver regularly and ensure you are doing all you can to keep you and your fetus healthy. Most women regain the weight they've lost, lose later in their pregnancy.

To help control your morning sickness drink plenty of water. Don't let yourself get dehydrated. Try to keep some type of fluid in you at all times. Eat small, frequent meals (6-8 a day). Low blood sugar in between large meals as well as an empty stomach could increase nausea and fatigue, so try to remain nourished at all times. Drink carbonated drinks. Many find that carbonation can help to neutralize high levels of stomach acid and settle your stomach. Eat starchy foods. Foods containing starch (crackers, toast, cheerios, and other dry cereals) tend to help with your nausea. Keep some with you in case you begin to feel sick. Don't take any medication for your symptoms without consulting your doctor.

Dizziness. Feeling dizzy or faint can occur at any stage of pregnancy. Most blood is flowing towards your uterus and legs which can decrease the amount of blood that [color=Plum]can reach your brain in the time needed as, for instance, you stand. [color=Plum]Try to have someone with you if you know you [color=Plum]are prone to dizziness when standing. Aside from blood levels, blood sugar and dehydration could be an issue.

Make sure you notify your doctor of any dizzy spells you experience, in case an underlying physical condition may be the source.

Hemorrhoids. Yes, this condition may be embarrassing to discuss, but it is a common and painful

Hemorrhoids are varicose veins (twisted or bulging veins) inside or on the outside of the rectum. These can cause itching, discomfort, and even bleeding. If bleeding is experienced with bowel movements, contact your physician.

To help you alleviate and prevent hemorrhoids prevent constipation. Make sure to drink a lot of fluids and have a high fiber diet. Decrease pressure. Sleeping on your side, not sitting or standing for extended periods of time, and not straining during bowel movements can reduce pressure on hemorrhoids. Prescription only. Any laxatives or stool softeners should only be used if approved or prescribed by a doctor.

Heartburn and Indigestion.

All the hormone increases that your body is going to experience allow the muscles in your esophagus and stomach to relax. move a little easier through your digestive system but may result in indigestion and heartburn.



To help ease digestive symptoms don't smoke. Eat slowly. Eating too fast and too much at one time can irritate the digestive tract, worsening heartburn and indigestion. Stay upright after eating. Lying down can interfere with the digestion process, provoking symptoms. Try not to eat large meals or snacks before going to bed, for the same reason. Talk to your physician. Ask your doctor to prescribe an antacid. Always speak to your physician before taking any medication, even over-the-counter.

Appetite Increase and Cravings. When your body has another to feed, your appetite is going to increase. The hormone changes can cause your taste in food to change somewhat. This is completely normal, and it is something many women experience. If you find yourself craving something you know you would be better off without eating, try to find a substitute just as filling but healthier. Most cravings disappear or weaken by the second trimester. ■

Be sure to read the next installment in September!



Cause of the Month: Veterans Airlift Command

by Katrina

With many injured war veterans coming home each and every day, this month TeenHelp's Cause of the Month is a phenomenal organization called Veterans Airlift Command.

Unfortunately, there are many current and former soldiers who need medical assistance but do not have a means of transportation from state to state, or country to country. Furthermore, there are also many families of veterans and current soldiers who would love nothing more than to visit their family member or friend in what might be their last weeks. Veterans Airlift Command "provides free air transportation to wounded warriors, veterans and their families for medical and other compassionate purposes through a national network of volunteer aircraft owners and pilots."

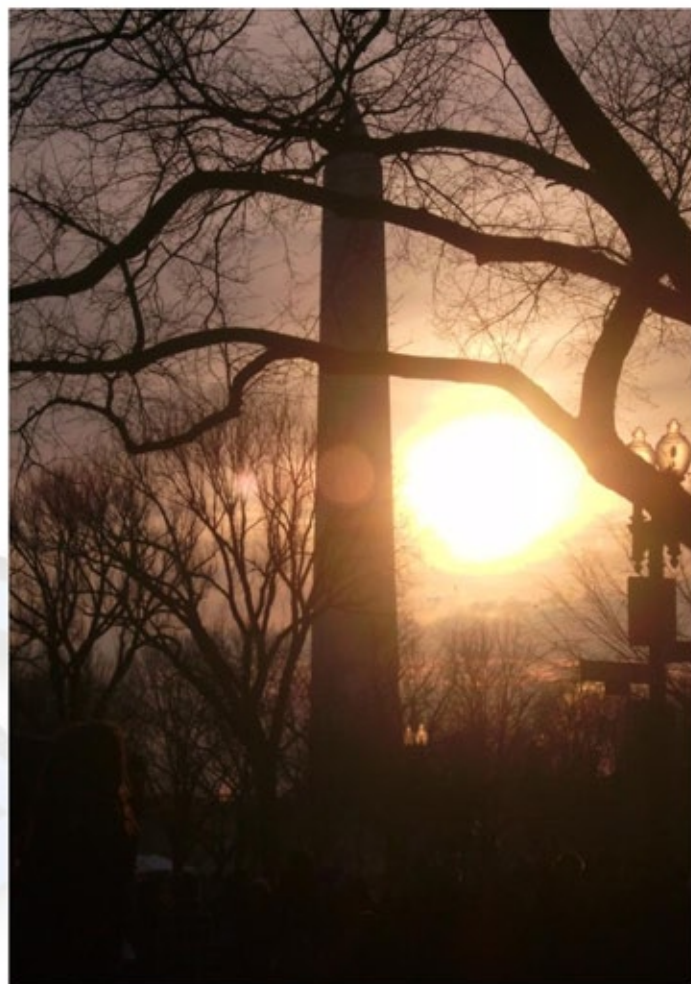
Basically, VAC works with a number of different people who all have something to give to this great organization. Firstly, they must find individuals and companies that are gracious enough to volunteer their planes and services (that is, pilots to fly the planes.) Also, VAC recognizes all financial donors on their website, whether the financial contribution is \$100,000 or \$100, every bit is appreciated. Lastly, VAC is very grateful to other websites who support and advertise VAC—without these websites, VAC may not be as prominent as it fortunately is today.

“Our priority is on the veterans of Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan). As capacity allows, our mission will expand to serve veterans of other conflicts.”

VAC was founded by Walt Fricke, whose own experiences inspired him to found this incredibly organization. As Fricke states:

"I spent six months in a hospital 700 miles from my hometown recovering from combat injuries sustained while flying a helicopter in Vietnam. My healing began in earnest when my family was able to gather the resources to make a trip to visit me."

VAC functions in a very unique way. On the website, www.veteransairlift.org, a list is updated constantly containing "Open Unassigned Missions," which are



Photograph by Jessie

missions that still need to be taken care of, but still need an aircraft, pilot, or both. Thanks to great organizations such as VAC as well as compassionate individuals, the list of completed missions is far, far longer than the list of "Open Unassigned Missions."

"As citizens, we owe an enormous debt to those who have sacrificed for our country. It's a debt that would be impossible to repay. But that won't stop us from trying."

Current miles flown total at 796,093 due to the donations of both time and money. Countless stories of families being brought together and the wounded soldiers and veterans not being left behind couldn't have been made a reality if not for the wonderful Veterans Airlift Command. For more information about this cause and how to volunteer to help, please visit the website. ■



How many days after a missed period should someone start to worry? When do they need to take a pregnancy test?

Hey,

It's good you're asking these kind of questions. They're important to ask, to make sure to get correct information.

Your best bet is to look at the back of the pregnancy test. It usually has clear instructions as to when it will be the most accurate. There really is nothing worse than an inaccurate pregnancy test.

Generally you should wait about 10-12 days after ovulation. So this does mean you need to track your period enough to know when you ovulate approximately. Another rule of thumb is about a week or two after you were supposed to get your period.

Sorry it's so broad, but really you just need to look at the back of the test. Also look into how accurate the early detector ones are, because they've been said to give more inaccurate results.

Best of luck!

- Maria (Gidig)

Hey there,

Well, to start, my name is Katrina, I'm eighteen years old, and I'm probably not the best person ever to ask about this! With that said, I do hope I'll be able to provide you with some valuable resources that you will be able to find useful.

What kind of protection did you use? You should always practice safe sex [sometimes even use more than one type of protection if you remember!]. It will save you a lot of worry and a couple of bucks that you'd use to buy a pregnancy test, so that's always a plus.

From now on, put a small red dot on your calendar on every day of your period so that you'll be able to keep track of your cycle. Then, take a test about two weeks after the date of the last missed one, as far as I know. For more information, checking out this site might be helpful: www.womenshealth.gov Good luck with everything, and take care of yourself.

- Katrina



Ask us for advice!

If you would like to submit a question for us to answer, you can email us at avatar@teenhelp.org or PM any of our Avatar Editors. We would love to hear from you!



Kicking off your month with pizzazz.

School and College: Being Prepared

by Jessie and Katrina

Starting, or going back to, school!

Whether you're starting upper level school or going back for your fourth and final year, school is all about what you make it to be. If you throw yourself into learning and making friends, you'll be prosperous in school. With that said, know that now is not the time to slack off! There are a few different things about going back to school or even starting school that we sometimes don't consider in the summer.

Firstly, *lockers*! Lockers are an important part of school in many different countries, and can either be used to a student's success or to his or her detriment. If possible, try to bring a locker organizer to orientation so that you can go ahead and stick it in your new locker as soon as you receive your assignment without having the stresses of the first day of school. Throughout the year, try to actually utilize your locker when managing which books to carry to which class so that you don't hurt your back carrying too much!

Secondly, *finding a place to sit in the lunch room*! This is cliché, certainly, but it's something that everyone has struggled with at one point or another. If you find yourself facing a lunch room full of students you hardly know, unsure of where to go sit, branch out and sit with people you don't really know as well. I know this may seem intimidating, but the lunch room can be a great portal to making new friends! Eventually, you'll become one of the "regulars" at the table, and then you'll be the one welcome new students to your table.

Finally, *using a planner*. Unlike college students, you're balancing six or seven classes a day. Anyone who is able to manage that without a planner is beyond me! Pick up a cool planner at the store a few weeks before school and really practice using it for everything. Write down birthdays, days you have off from school, days you plan to take vacations on, and everything in between. Once you actually start getting to classes, you'll be so used to using your planner, it will hopefully be second nature to go ahead and write down your homework assignments. Though it may seem annoying at first, it will definitely save you a lot of stress in the long run.

The most important thing about school is just to try to make light of things. Really dig into the work teachers are giving you, but don't stress yourself out too much. Utilize deep breathing techniques and just remind yourself that in the end, you'll have to work hard, but if you do, things will be okay.

“The most important thing about school is just to try to make light of things.”

Going (back) to college!

Starting college (or, for you Brits, university) is both exciting and scary, all at once! You are about to begin an entirely new period in your life. Chances are you're moving away from home for the first time and will be living in on-campus housing. You probably already know the basics of what you will need to take with you when moving into your dormitory. Clothes (including socks and underwear!) and personal care items like soap, shampoo, and other toiletries go without saying. There are a lot of things that are easy to forget, though, in the excitement of preparing for school.

Using office supplies to stay organized. Keeping organized can be hard, especially when you are adjusting to a new way of living. To make things easier on yourself buy a day planner. You will want it to have enough space to write down things like homework assignments, due dates for papers, exam dates, reminders for social functions and meetings, and anything else that may come up!

Other office and study supplies you may find useful are sticky notes, highlighters, colored pens, and folders. Use cups or bins to keep your desk organized and free of clutter, and folders or binders to keep your papers in order. Making sure your papers for each of your courses are separate will alleviate the stress of finding what you need, when you need it. You might also want to invest in a magnetic dry erase board or cork board for your wall. These are usually fairly affordable and are great for pinning up reminders, important papers, phone numbers and email addresses, or whatever else you need to remember!

(continued on page 12)



Kicking off your month with pizzazz.

How could I forget? When you are moved into your dorm and all settled in, you will probably begin to notice you have forgotten a lot of things. In an attempt to avoid this, try making some lists. One list could be "things I used every day." Go through your daily routine and write down the things you use, like a tooth brush, deodorant, and cell phone. Another list will be of things you use often or infrequently. Accidents happen and you may need Band-Aids, for example, and although you may not use them every day, Q-tips really come in handy. Don't forget the cords to your electronics!



If you do forget things, chances are you will have the opportunity to get them later. If you are going to school far from home and will be traveling by plane or train, you may actually prefer to go shopping once you have arrived. Traveling lightly is much more convenient than packing an entire life into a suitcase or two. ■

More on School?

How else can you prepare for school? Check out some other articles!

For more on organization read "*The Art of Organization*" on page 9 of the May 2009 (Volume 2, Issue 11) release of Avatar.

To brush up on those study and test taking techniques, check out "*Testing Times: Coping With Exams*." on page 7 of the March 2009 issue (Volume 2, Issue 9).

If you want to brush up on your writing skills in preparation for essays and other assignments, read "*Poem Writing*" in Volume 3, Issue 1 (July 2009), page 12 and "*Developing an Essay*" in Volume 2, Issue 4 (October 2008), page 9.

Contact us!



Do you have any comments or feedback on any of our featured Lifestyle article? Would you like to see one of your articles here or do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you.

www.teenhelp.org/submit
or
avatar@teenhelp.org



It's all fun and games until you're upside down.

TeenHelp's Top Ten World Roller Coasters

by Nat (Strider)

Do you like thrills? Then this list of some of the biggest, scariest, and best roller coasters in the world is for you!

Behemoth

Theme Park: Canada's Wonderland
Location: Vaughan, Ontario, Canada
Type of ride: steel roller coaster
Height: 230 feet (70 metres)

About: The Behemoth was finished construction in January 2008, surpassing Goliath, a coaster at Montreal's La Ronde theme park, as the largest, fastest, and tallest roller coaster in Canada. The train cars feature staggered seating, and the riders are kept in by lap bars, making Behemoth even more frightening on the 75-degree angled drops.

The Hulk

Theme Park: Universal Studios
Location: Orlando, Florida, United States
Type of ride: steel roller coaster
Height: 110 feet (33.5 metres)

About: Aptly named after the popular comic book character, The Incredible Hulk Coaster is a monster of a ride. The train is shot within two seconds right into a zero-g roll, and reaches speeds up to 67 miles per hour (107.8 km/h). Not only was it once voted as the number one roller coaster, it also makes waiting in line interesting! Riders are taken through the lab of Bruce Banner and get to experience the feeling of being inside the comic book.

Millennium Force

Theme Park: Cedar Point
Location: Sandusky, Ohio, United States
Type of ride: steel roller coaster
Height: 310 feet (94 metres)

About: Millennium Force is a renowned coaster voted number one in the world five times since 2001, never coming in less than second place. It broke ten world records when it first opened in 2000, and now continues its popularity, despite being overshadowed in height by the newer Top Thrill Dragster. Reaching speeds up to 93 miles per hour (150 km/h), Millennium Force is one of the tallest, longest, fastest, and most popular roller coasters in the world.



Photograph by Maria (Gidig)

Nemesis

Theme Park: Alton Towers
Location: Staffordshire, England
Type of ride: inverted, steel roller coaster
Height: 43 feet (13 metres)

About: The popularity of Nemesis at the Alton Towers theme park in England has not decreased since its opening back in 1994. In 2008 it was voted the thirteenth best steel coaster in the world, and it is still one of the main attractions at the park. Featuring a zero-g roll, vertical loop, and stall turn, Nemesis proves that height isn't what makes a coaster scream-worthy.

Eejanaika

Theme Park: Fuji-Q Highland
Location: Fujiyoshida, Yamanashi, Japan
Type of ride: 4th Dimension steel roller coaster
Height: 249.33 feet (76 metres)

About: Eejanaika is the world's second 4th dimension roller coaster. A 4th dimension roller coaster has seats that can rotate forward or backward in a 360-degree spin—talk about one wild ride! This Japanese roller coaster has the most inversions in the world, most of which are achieved by the spinning seats.

Space Mountain

Theme Park: Disneyland
Location: California, Florida, Paris, Hong Kong, Tokyo
Type of ride: steel roller coaster
Height: 65 feet (19.8 metres)

About: Although not the tallest or fastest coaster out there, Space Mountain is definitely a classic. It is an indoor roller coaster that uses lights, props, and effects just as much as the speed and feel of a small coaster to entertain the riders. If you are not interested in spinning teacups or flying elephants, this is a ride you will enjoy.



It's all fun and games until you're upside down.

Goliath

Theme Park: Six Flags

Locations: Valencia, California, United States.

Type of ride: steel roller coaster

Height: 235 feet (72 metres)

About: Goliath is a giant of a coaster 4500 feet in length with a 255 foot drop. The drop was the longest and fastest until it was surpassed by Millennium Force in May 2000. Still a favourite by many, it can hold up to 1600 riders per hour, and has been featured in television shows such as Zoey 101 and The King of Queens.

Top Thrill Dragster

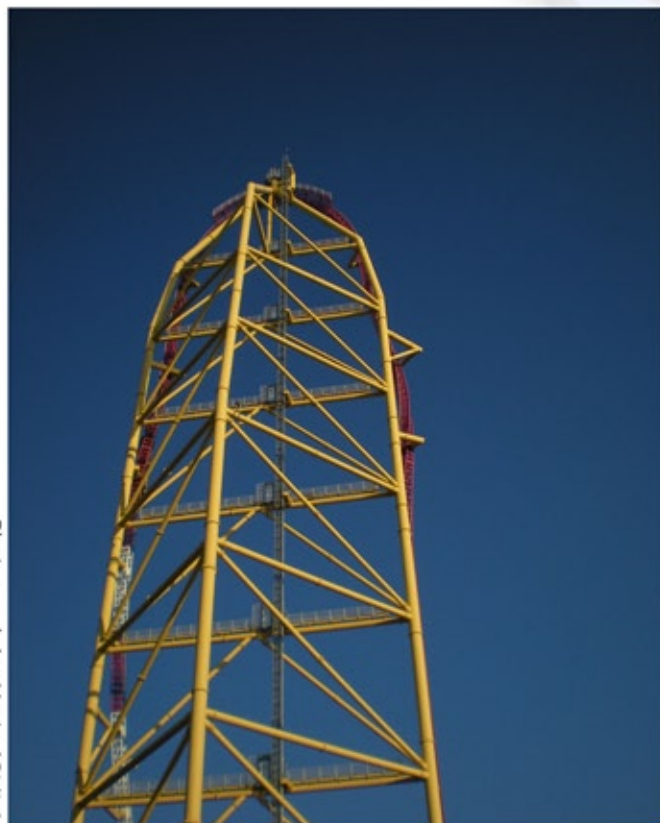
Theme Park: Cedar Point

Location: Sandusky, Ohio, United States.

Type of ride: steel roller coaster

Height: 420 feet (130 metres)

About: The Top Thrill Dragster is one of two stratacoasters in the world. Its terrifying height is what gives it the 'stratacoaster' status, as it must be between 400 and 499 feet to be labeled as one. Featuring clockwise and counterclockwise turns on the drops, this is one frightening ride. But make sure you follow the rules and go on a sunny day, because the Top Thrill Dragster will not run if anyone's hands are in the air or if it is rainy.



Photograph by Maria (Gidig)

Tower of Terror

Theme Park: Dreamworld

Location: Coomera, Queensland, Australia.

Type of ride: steel roller coaster

Height: 377 feet (115 metres)

About: As the fastest and tallest roller coaster in the southern hemisphere, the Tower of Terror definitely lives up to its name. The riders are brought up to approximately 38 stories high, feeling weightless for around 6.5 seconds of the journey, before falling back down and coming to a stop. Like many roller coasters these days, the Tower of Terror features a camera that takes a photograph right after the car is launched.

Steel Dragon 2000

Theme Park: Nagashima Spa Land

Location: Mie Prefecture, Japan.

Type of ride: steel roller coaster

Height: 318.25 feet (97 metres)

About: How long can you scream for? Chances are you won't be able to anymore by the time you get off this ride. The Steel Dragon 2000 currently holds the record for the longest track, and it doesn't look like it's going to give it up any time soon. The coaster gets its name from the year 2000—the year of the dragon—and its twisting track is aptly named.

Contact us!

Do you have any comments or feedback on TeenHelp Top Tens? Would you like to contribute to Top Tens or do you have any suggestions on what you'd like to see in Fun & Games in future editions of Avatar? If so, we'd love to hear from you!

Submission form: www.teenhelp.org/submit
Email: avatar@teenhelp.org



Shikaku (Rectangles)

by Jessie

Shikaku (also called *Divide by Squares*, *Divide by Box*, or *Rectangles*) is a logic puzzle.

The rules are simple and short. The object is to divide the grid into only rectangular and square pieces so that each section contains one number. The number in the section should exactly represent the area of the rectangle. Each square will be used only once; you should have no leftover squares.

As an example, here is the solution for a 5x5 Shikaku puzzle:

2		2		
				4
	8			
4			2	
			3	

2		2		
				4
	8			
4			2	
			3	

Now you try!

Easy 7x7:

	4			5		
		5				
	4				8	
3				3		
			3			3
				2		
2			3		4	

Intermediate 10x10:

					4				
			4			3			
						2	2		
	16			9				14	
						6			
		3							
			10						
			2						3
			4					8	
2	8								

Hard 15x15:

5					2		8			4				
				9									4	
		6												
	2		3					8				20		
		2						3						
		2		6				3		4				
7					22									
					6	8				10				
		3						4						
		9										6		
				9				6						
							5							9
	2	2	2							4		2	4	
	2			2					10					



Expressing life through your fingertips.

Untitled

by Ricardo (Shish)



Love

By Adam



Blissful Ignorance

By x_muse

With the taste of the wind upon her lips and the sound of the air in her lungs,
She took her usual walk in the emerald green meadow.
Not a bad thought in her head as she hummed an innocent tune of nectar.
Her fingers brushed across the oak tree as she whispered her feelings to it, silently.
She sighed of contentment as she sat at the base of the tall oak guardian.
This was her home, her safe haven, her comfort, her place.
Her eyes drooped and her soft hands fell to her side as she began to sleep.
Dreaming of only gardenias and passerine birds.
But she was not alone in her safe haven at the time.
A frequent passerby saw the familiar figure and shook their head in sorrow.
They knew all too well the story of the fragile girl beneath the oak,
The one whom everyone talked about, but in a sorrowful way.
Her life was coming to a close, just like the day was too.
The passerby had a tangible jealousy as she watched the young girl doze,
For the fragile one was in a perpetual state of blissful ignorance.
She was unaware of the card fate had dealt her with a vengeful hand.
The child was more content than the passerby who did have a future to look forward to.
So, she remained there during that twilight, hidden in the darkness,
Long after the passerby went on their way to lead their life.
But she stayed, peacefully, until she too became part of the shadows.

“Baby steps, they may seem small at first, but they are huge accomplishments.”

- Casey



Rawr!

by Katrina

This month's sign: Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Leo! I hope you have the best birthday ever. As always, you're off to steal the spotlight, especially in your birth month! Something great (think promotion, raise, passing your entrance exams, etc) is going to happen to you this August, but I'm not telling you what it is because I know how much you love surprises.

Strength: August babies, you're not afraid to be in the limelight! July babies, you're not afraid to put in the extra mile to make sure you get along just fine without stealing the limelight too much.

Possible Weakness: You sometimes have trouble staying focused for long periods of time.

Famous Leos: Amelia Earhart, Mick Jagger, Clara Bow, Benito Mussolini, Emily Bronte, Yves St. Laurent, Andy Warhol, Lucille Ball, Magic Johnson, Robert De Niro

Aries

(March 21 – April 19)

March babies, are you ready to go back to school? You know the teachers may make you fill out those cheesy "What are your goals for this year?" handouts. Just in case, be ready for that and know what you want to accomplish this school year. April babies, you've been cruising for the past few months. Unfortunately, things may be a little rocky at the beginning and the middle of the month, but everything will clear up by around the 20th.

Cancer

(June 21 – July 22)

June babies, this month is sure to be a hit or miss month for you. Unfortunately, the only one who can determine which this will be is yourself, so definitely try to keep your chin up throughout the month! July babies, I hope you had a brilliant birthday. Be sure to thank all of those who sent you wishes and continue thanking those who have positive impacts in your life.

Taurus

(April 20 – May 20)

April babies, you really need to get some Pisces in your life! Because your personalities match so well, there's sure to be a Pisces friendship sometime in your near future. May babies, as long as you play your cards right this is sure to be a definite win of a month. Just follow your gut instinct and you'll be on the right track!

Gemini

(May 21 – June 20)

May babies, this month you need to take time to smell the roses! You're getting so overwhelmed with the big picture that you're forgetting to appreciate the little picture. June babies, this month should be all about taking care of yourself. Make sure you're where you need to be when you need to be there both physically and mentally.

Virgo

(August 23 – September 22)

August babies, your birthday is coming up soon. Do you have your "new year's" resolutions and wishes thought up yet? If not, better go ahead and get that done; time flies when you're having fun. September babies, your birthday will hit just as it's time to go back to school. Remember to have a positive attitude upon your return; school can only be as fun as you make it.



Rawr!

by Katrina

Libra

(September 23 - October 22)

September babies, watch out for those feisty Leos. By the end of the month, I predict that one will have tried to steal your spotlight at least twice! October babies, this month, you just get to chill and relax. When you begin to get stressed out, just try to take deep breaths and not let yourself get too freaked out.

Sagittarius

(November 21 - December 21)

November babies, start a new regimen this month! For example, close your eyes and take five deep breaths each afternoon to keep from getting too stressed out. December babies, bundle up with winter (unless you happen to live in a very hot country, then please don't bundle up), the temperature is unfortunately not the only thing that may be cold to you this month.

Capricorn

(December 22 - January 19)

December babies, only about half a year until your birthday! That's not too bad, right? Cherish being the age that you are now, though; you'll never get to come back to this point in time. January babies, this month try and make peace with something about someone you don't like that you know they can't help; this will help you be ready for whatever may be thrown at you when you head out into the "real world."

Aquarius

(January 20 - February 19)

January babies, hello! Speaking of hello, you need to say hello to someone you don't normally talk to at least once a week this month. You never know who they could be or what they might have to offer you. February babies, beware of the Scorpios this month; it seems like they might have something against you. Just smile and get on with your life, though.

Scorpio

(October 23 - November 20)

October babies, you need to go Trick-Or-Treating this Halloween, if you celebrate it! Who knows, one candy bag might be stuffed with dollar bills, and I know you'd love that. November babies, I foresee a very interesting relationship with an Aquarius in your near future.

Pisces

(February 20 - March 19)

February babies, this month would be a good month for you to volunteer at the local firehouse shelter or give to another cause. For some really neat ones, check out Teen-Help's "Cause of the Month!" March babies, did you ever get around to reading that book you meant to read four months ago? If not, it looks like this is the month to do it since I see you having extra free time this August.



Acknowledgements

Image sources

Dear Avatar: www.everystockphoto.com

Immunizations: www.freedigitalphotos.net

School and College: Being Prepared: www.freedigitalphotos.net

Star signs: www.grafamania.net

The Stages of Pregnancy: www.freedigitalphotos.net

Urmuqi Erupts: www.freedigitalphotos.net

Articles

Immunizations: health.howstuffworks.com

The Stages of Pregnancy: www.pregnancytoday.com; www.pregnancy-info.net

Thanks for reading!

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Avatar! Any comments, questions, suggestions or criticisms can be directed towards the editorial team. You can also send us any submissions you have for Avatar, which are a really important part of keeping Avatar alive. We appreciate any submissions that are made to us. We look forward to hearing from you, and hope you enjoy the next edition of Avatar!

The Avatar Editors.

Please visit us at the Avatar page, www.avatar.teenhelp.org, or email us at avatar@teenhelp.org.