



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

## Where is my last day of school?

**RIYANA AFROZE**

Convinced I look like an owl (wise and lacking sleep) in the graduation regalia, I settled down for my virtual graduation ceremony.

I scrolled through the participants to get a glimpse of the people I shared a classroom with, before changing the layout to fit my best friends in one frame. It was a chore, but hey, I had the most beautiful faces on my screen.

The next one-and-a-half-hour was brimmed with nostalgia, but there was still space for motivation and zeal. In the end, through sending virtual clapping emoji, we were done with our “school life.”

However, a few months after goodbyes were officially said, the reality of it suddenly hit me as I saw the juniors prepare for school. I realised there were no more uniforms, no more heavy backpacks and no more strict hair styling rules — I could finally highlight my hair and no one would be bothered.

My friends and I, unsurprisingly, failed to realise every single plan that was made for the last two years in school. On top of that, we lost the opportunity to go on any school trips as well. Be it sleepovers or a trip to Sylhet, unfortunately, none of them came to fruition.

An average human spends about 15 to 16 years in school. The transition from school to university is a big one. A very big one. It’s a transformation that is meant to be celebrated and cherished. But it feels like we lacked the closure required to appreciate these new beginnings.

We never got to have that “cinematic separation.” Growing up, we had been anticipating the day we would all take flight and find our places in the world. It’s sad to think we may never see some familiar faces again, and we never got the grand farewell we all had planned for each other.

It doesn’t matter who moved out and who stayed back. We won’t be sharing the same classroom anymore. Now that schools have reopened, the classroom chairs and cafeteria benches will no longer remain empty but we won’t be a part of it anymore.

The library books may be cleaned, the dust removed, but not the traces we left in them, right? We must have made an impact; we must have left a mark.

I remember walking through the corridor with my friend discussing the predicted yet spontaneous school closure, back in March 2020. Little did I know that the day I left the campus for a “two-week closure” would casually become the last day attending classes under that roof.

The reopening of schools may be a joyous occasion for many, but it also brings a wave of resentment for the ones who have been robbed of the experience of a distinct “last day of school.”

*Riyana is an introvert self-debating on whether she is an INFJ or INFP. Send her memes on introversion and MBTI personality tests on Instagram at @\_raya\_riyana\_*

# What are we doing on our phones?

**SABIBA HOSSAIN**

Did your parents ever accuse you of staring at your phone all day?

I’m not saying we’re not guilty of doing this. A lot of our precious time is wasted scrolling through social media, liking posts, typing comments. But is that all? Are we really accomplishing nothing by making use of our phones?

I had a chance to reflect on what it’s like to live in the digital era. It has made me question whether we’re actually doing something meaningful with our phones, or if it’s what our parents say we are doing – wasting our lives with something intangible.

According to UNESCO, the uses of digital devices, communication applications, and the ability to access networks and manage information are defined as digital skills that are imperative to know to survive in the 21st century. Setting up a social media account or having the ability to distinguish facts from hoaxes may seem as easy as breathing air to you, but they’re now legally defined skills.

Gen Z, also known as the generation most hooked to their smartphones, has access to anything and everything through their phones. They shop, watch movies, write memos, listen to audiobooks and more all through their phones.

Nashiha Ali, a student of Holy Cross College, shares her opinion, “I spent a huge chunk of my time during this pandemic doing digital drawings. As someone who is new to the whole thing, I had a lot of help watching tutorial videos and scrolling for hours on Instagram and Pinterest on my phone.”

Al Zubayer Onkon, a grade 12 student,

says that he’s aware of wasting time on social media and understands why his parents think negatively of it. “But that’s not all,” he adds, “I’ve also increased my work productivity and enhanced certain skills, and once I showed my parents this, they became more supportive.”

We’ve seen young people setting up their own kitchens or small businesses, posting tutorials, organising events, and taking action over important issues through their phones. Students are turning their hobbies into part-time jobs using mobile phones and earning money to cover their own expenses.

Social media is a great tool for networking and finding opportunities. However, it has acquired such an infamous reputation that it’s quite difficult for our elders to think that anything good could come from it. The generation gap between the Gen Z, millennials, and the Gen X is a crucial factor.

Gen Z didn’t have to adapt to smartphones; they got accustomed to it like they did their native languages. For that reason, Gen Zs are more comfortable with doing work digitally than on paper. “It’s much faster, and I can store everything in one place,” says Sadia Hossain Samarah, an A Level student.

Is our attachment to technology healthy or addictive?

### Reference

UNESCO.org (March 16, 2018). *Digital Skills Critical for Jobs and Social Inclusion*.

*Sabiba Hossain is a Hufflepuff who plans to go into hibernation every winter but never succeeds. Send her fantasy book recs at fb.com/Sabibastro*



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