

# Clocking in with Vanguard

## Time to get a watch: PHS student interviews

Aryan Singla, ONLINE CO-EDITOR  
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### Shaurya Ranjan '27

**What watch do you wear, and why do you like to wear it?**

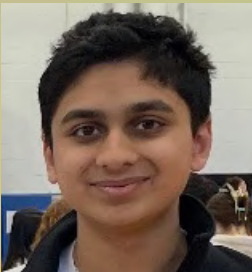
I wear a Gucci watch ... I'm pretty sure it's the Gucci Chrono. It was a gift from my parents when we went to Amsterdam.

**Are you an avid watch collector?**

I'm not. I would like to be a collector one day, but I'm too broke for that. I have two watches in my collection currently. One is a Fastrack watch from India, which I'm not sure of the model, and the other one is my Gucci watch. I have several on my list that I want to get, which I don't have on the top of my head right now, but I am a watch enthusiast to some extent.

**Why did you choose a mechanical watch over a smartwatch or digital one?**

Digital watches are okay, but smartwatches ruin the fun of watches. The whole idea of a watch is to have a timepiece and not a mini smartphone. Having that timepiece on your wrist is the essence of watches. I don't want an Apple Watch. I don't want any sort of smart watch. [I favor] analog and digital [watches], and even then I prefer analog. I think some ... retro digital watches, are pretty cool. Smartwatches ruin it. You have your smartphone in your pocket in most scenarios, and there are not many reasons why you would exclusively need a smart watch besides the fitness tracking stuff. Aesthetically, if you're looking for a watch, analog and digital are the only way to go.



Shaurya  
Ranjan '27



Aleric  
Deess '28

### Aleric Deess '28

**What watch do you wear, and why do you like to wear it?**

I like Apple Watches because I do cross country, so it's very important for tracking my mileage, my pace; I can also call people in emergencies if I'm out. I think it's very versatile. Just smartwatches, generally, and ... the fitness tracking.

**Are you an avid watch collector?**

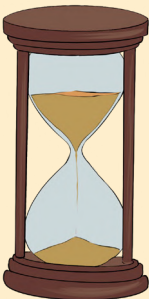
I'm not a very crazy watch collector, but probably Timex or non-smartwatches. I feel like they look cool and they're fun to just have. I don't really collect though.

**Do you wear a watch daily or on some occasions?**

I have an Apple Watch that I wear daily because I train daily. [I also use it] for the convenience of telling the time, [and for] calling people if I don't have my phone on me.

**How did you get this watch in particular and why do you like it?**

I'm not entirely sure about what exact model my watch is, but it is a larger screen Apple Watch, and I like it because it's very convenient and it does what it needs to do very well. I think that it's very good for what I do and my schedule and everything that I do, all the activities, etc.



### Charlotte Valvanis '26

**What watch do you wear and why do you wear it?**

I wear a Plein watch that I got ... from my dad for my birthday last year.

**Are you an avid watch collector?**

I am not a watch collector. This is actually my first watch besides my Apple Watch, but I've been wanting ... a nicer watch that I can wear to Model UN conferences and fancier events for a while. So my dad got me this one.

**Do you prefer mechanical watches over smart watches or digital ones?**

I prefer mechanical watches. I think there's something about them that just looks timeless. It fits in a lot of spaces and ... I don't have to take it off and put it in my backpack [during tests]. It's not technology. It's just easy to use.

**What's your favorite part about the watch?**

It's very shiny, which I've gotten some hate for, but I kind of like the way it reflects the light. I think it's gorgeous.



Charlotte  
Valvanis '26



Felix  
Yu '27

### Felix Yu '27

**What watch do you wear, and why do you like to wear it?**

I wear a Garmin Forunner 55, [and] I got it because I needed to track my runs. It's also just really nice because it tracks a lot of stuff like heart rate, sleep, and like exercise data.

**Are you an avid watch collector?**

I don't really collect any watches, [and] my old watches I just give it to my parents and they do stuff with it. I also use my watches for [more] practical purposes, so I don't really see a point in collecting them if I'm not going to use them.

**Do you wear a watch daily or on some occasions?**

I really like my watch and I wear it all the time, except for [maybe] an hour a week to charge.

**Is there a specific type of watch that you like? Mechanical? Digital?**

I really like Garmins, or other good running watches that have a good GPS, a good battery life, and can show a lot of physical stats [like heartbeat].



# Time-keeping through the years

Maxime DeVico, STAFF WRITER

**Ancient Egyptian sundials (1500 BCE):** One of the earliest time keeping devices, coming in 12-hour and 24-hour varieties, sundials functioned by positioning a shadow-casting object, a gnomon, vertically in their center point. The sun cast a shadow on the stick — as the Earth rotated, so did the shadow, which acted like the hand of a clock.

**Chinese candle clocks (520 CE):** The Chinese candle clock consisted of six candles. Each candle was specially designed to burn at a predictable pace, typically lasting four hours, and had 12 markings each measuring one inch. Once one candle burned out, the other was immediately lit. The six candles accounted for the 24 hours of a day.

**European church clocks (13th–15th centuries):** Purely mechanical, these early clocks were created by Pope Sylvester II. Unlike clocks today, they didn't have a face: they told the time through hourly striking of a bell. The first one was the Dunstable Priory clock in Medieval England, its purpose to alert the clergy of their prayer duties.

**Pocket watch (17th–20th centuries):** The pocket watch, typically held by a chain, emerged when men stopped wearing their watches on pendants. This is said to have resulted from the introduction of waistcoats into men's fashion by Charles II. What originated as a status symbol in Europe came to be associated with railroading in the United States, due to the necessity of precise timekeeping to prevent collisions.

**Smartwatch (21st century):** Smartwatches, portable wearable computers, rely on connection to a mobile device to carry out a multitude of functions. Smartwatches are unique for their versatility and ability to blend fitness tracking with everyday functionalities. As they have become more advanced, smartwatches have developed to include more sophisticated health-tracking technologies, such as sleep apnea detection, alerts for abnormal heart rates, and analysis of cough patterns.

## Appreciating the moment

Aritra Ray, MANAGING EDITOR

“The bell doesn’t dismiss you. I do.”

The famous quip from teachers to a class of students too eager to leave. And when the bell rings, the silent hallway instantly fills with the sounds of being pushed back, students grabbing their bags, and filling the hallways in a rush to get out of their class. A rush to what’s next. Never once pausing to savor the current moment. Indeed, our high school’s atmosphere is always about the next thing — and the next, and the one after that. One may call it looking forward, yet it also often seems like looking beyond. Like craning your neck to look beyond the person who you’re conversing with.

Our obsession with what’s next pulls us away from the present. And when there’s a hundred and one things to do, getting to the next item on our evergrowing to-do list may seem like the most important priority in the present. But the here and now is fundamentally special. It is something that never comes back. There will always be tomorrow — and the day after. But never today again. Today is unique. Today, once lost, can only be seen in hindsight.

To value the present moment is not a skill that should be taken lightly. Nor is it cultivated easily. To slow down and think in the moment is something that is often lost upon us. We think of the present as being a task already completed — something already checked off our list — and then we allow our mind to be occupied with what’s next. And the next day, we are torn between the past and the future. We are feeble of mind when it comes to recalling our experiences in just the days past, because we were never really there. We were here — in the future — and now all we can look back. And as much as we would like to look back fondly and bask in the warmth of our experiences, we find ourselves trapped in a loop. A hamster wheel that goes forth. Because our experiences, in the absence of being experienced, are nothing but time in passing.

## COVID clockwork: Blurred time in the face of a global pandemic

Claire Tang, CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Anna Petrova, VANGUARD CO-EDITOR

Apart from disrupting economies and healthcare systems, the COVID-19 pandemic warped a deeply personal cognitive process: our perception of time. With normal routines like going to school, hanging out with friends, and going shopping fading away, it became common for many people to lose track of the date.

“While [the pandemic] was happening, [the one and a half years] felt way longer,” said Serafina Joseph ’26. “I wasn’t really doing anything, [and] there were no monumental things happening.”

But when reflecting on the pandemic, students find that their perception of its total duration shrank, despite feeling like every day was crawling in the moment.

“Things do seem faster ... it has messed up how I view time,” said Alena Ivanov ’27.

Students from around the world share the sentiment that the passage of time has felt different ever since March 2020. During the pandemic, the disruption of daily routines caused temporal landmarks and distinction between days to fade, commonly leading to the telescoping effect — the underestimate or overestimate to the recency of past events. A 2022 study conducted by the National Institute of Health found a significant relationship between time perception, focus, and awareness. Consequently, the side effects of the telescoping effects and other cognitive distortions of time include inaccurate, fragmented memories, poor decision-making, and a higher risk for mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Higher overall levels of mental health disorders during the pandemic further exacerbated the effects of this temporal disintegration.

Years after the pandemic, students still notice its lingering effects on their perception of time. Although purchasing a pack of paper masks for the first time may at times feel like a distant memory, there are also moments where the announcement about school being cancelled for two weeks feels like yesterday. Whether the events feel like a day, a year, or a decade ago, the change in routine and emotional upheaval of the pandemic makes many feel like they missed out on a valuable time of their lives.

“[It feels] like we’re still kind of making up for lost time,” said Ivanov.

graphics: Charley Hu