



Get in the  
**GAME**

Essex High School  
Summer Reading

**Points**

**200**

**Rising 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>  
graders**

**250**

**Rising 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>  
graders**

Essex High School  
PO Box 1006  
833 High School Circle  
Tappahannock, VA 22560  
(804)443-4301



Join *Essex High School Summer Reading* on Facebook for updates, events, and bonus points.

Want text updates and reminders about summer reading?

Sign up for Remind!

Mrs. Early would like you to join Summer  remind Reading!

To receive messages via text, text **@bbk3d** to **81010**. You can opt-out of messages at anytime by replying, 'unsubscribe @bbk3d'.

Trouble using 81010? Try texting **@bbk3d** to **(571) 414-0211** instead.



Or to receive messages via email, send an email to **bbk3d@mail.remind.com**. To unsubscribe, reply with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.



#### WHAT IS REMIND AND WHY IS IT SAFE?

Remind is a free, safe, and simple messaging tool that helps teachers share important updates and reminders with students & parents. Subscribe by text, email or using the Remind app. All personal information is kept private. Teachers will never see your phone number, nor will you see theirs.

Visit [remind.com](http://remind.com) to learn more.

## **Essex High School Summer Reading Program**

### **Why do we have to do summer reading?**

1. Reading is rewarding.
2. Reading builds a mature vocabulary.
3. Reading makes you a better writer.
4. Reading is hard, and —hard is necessary.
5. Reading makes you smarter.
6. Reading prepares you for the world of work.
7. Reading well is financially rewarding.
8. Reading opens the door to college and beyond.
9. Reading arms you against oppression.

*Kelly Gallagher, 2003 Reading Reasons: Motivational MiniLessons for Middle and High School. p. 17*

### **What can I read?**

Anything you want. You can complete the activities from the menu or you can read books that interest you to complete your point goal. We have included some passages for you (if you are interested) to help you get started.

### **How do I earn points?**

You earn a point for every page you read. You keep track of your points by recording the titles of your reading choices in the Reading Log (p.5) and how many pages of it you read. You can also receive bonus points for special events on Facebook or at the library. Check the menu for easy points as well!

### **What if I only read one book?**

Great! But hopefully, you will read more. If you are having trouble finding any interesting books, feel free to email Mrs. Early, send a private message to the Essex High School Facebook group, or ask the public librarian. We would love to help you find something you'd like to read!

### **What happens if I earn all the points?**

If you meet your point goal, turn in your Reading Log to your English teacher in September 2016 or on back-to-school night. You will be invited to attend a special event, and you will be entered into a drawing for prizes.

### **What if I don't meet the point goal?**

First, let us know through a private message on the Facebook page that you are having trouble so we can help you. We want you to read something fun, not something difficult! Second, consult the reading menu (pg. 4) for articles and ideas. If you forget to complete the summer reading program, you may have a little catch-up reading to do for homework for English class next year so that you are not behind.

### **How do I turn in my reading log?**

Collection boxes will be available on Back-to-School Night. Or you can bring it with you to your first English class.

## SUMMER READING MENU

Each square below includes a different reading activity. If you need ideas about what to read to meet your summer reading goal, use them! Remember: you don't have to read just books. Look for magazines, literature from one of the area parks, or the newspaper. We have included some reading materials for you. After you complete an activity, place an "X" on that square. Then record the title, date you finished reading, pages read, and why you read it in the reading log. For a little bonus, share your accomplishments on the Essex High School Summer Reading Facebook page!

Do you have to read the things listed here? **NO!** Read whatever you want to meet your page goals. These are just suggestions.

Read about an animal	Read about the state you live in	Read a non-fiction book	Read a book then see a movie based on that book	Read something written by a woman
Read a mystery	Read a book your friend recommends	Read about a famous American	Read about the environment	Read about Africa or Australia
Read a poem	Draw a picture of a character in a book you read this summer	Read a book to someone younger than you... or to your pet!	Read a book written more than 100 years ago	Read about an inventor
Read about an adventure	Read about a health issue	Read about a holiday	Read a biography of someone who is different from you	Read about friends
Read about summer	Read a true crime story	Read about history	Read about a conspiracy theory	Read about a college or career field (including military)
Read a book by an author from another country	Read about one of your role models	Read about working from home	Read about a controversial issue	Read about an election

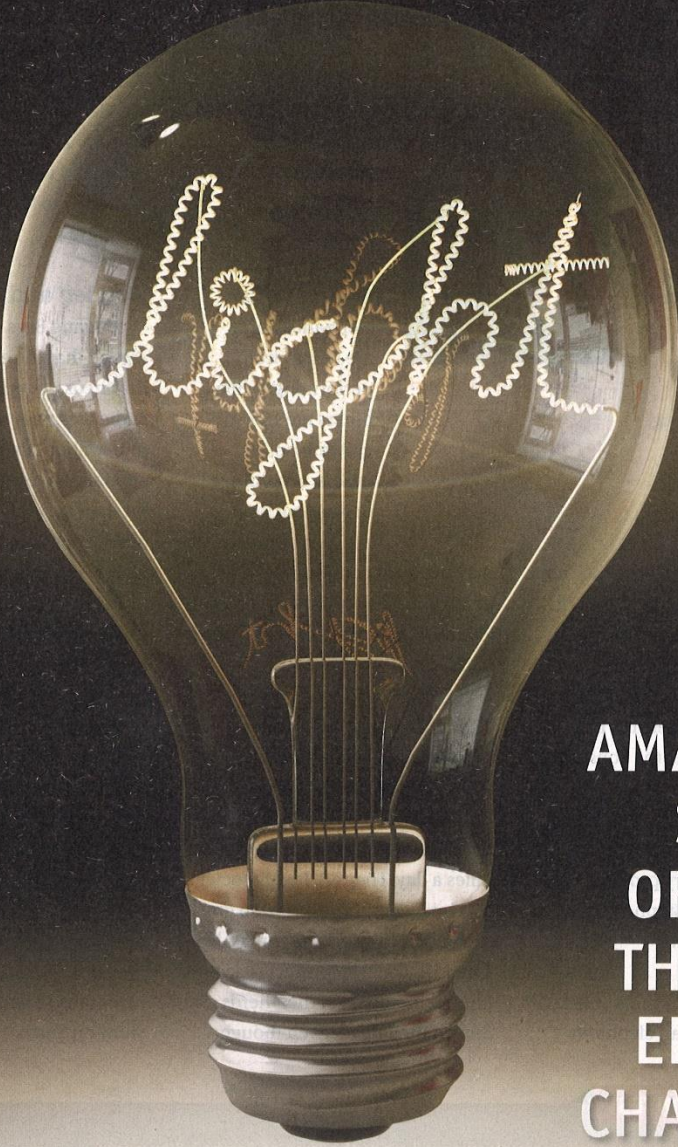
## SUMMER READING LOG

<b>RISING 9<sup>TH</sup> &amp; 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS</b>	<b>RISING 11<sup>TH</sup> &amp; 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS</b>
200 pages (about 2 pages a day)	250 pages (about 3 pages a day)
TITLE	DATE READ
	# OF PAGES
	WHY YOU READ IT

1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
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9				
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25				

Need more room? Send us a message on the Essex High School Summer Reading Facebook page, and we'll get you one!

Want to read about an inventor? Want to read a play? Then read this dramatic piece about Thomas Edison, inventor of the light bulb.



**HISTORICAL FICTION**  
a story inspired by true events

**THE AMAZING STORY OF HOW THOMAS EDISON CHANGED THE WORLD**

**BY SPENCER KAYDEN**

**16** SCHOLASTIC SCOPE • MAY 2015

**CHARACTERS**

- \*Starred characters are major roles.
- HISTORIANS 1 AND 2 (H1, H2)**
- \***NARRATORS 1 AND 2 (N1, N2)**
- \***THOMAS EDISON**, a famous inventor
- \***ALFRED**, a 12-year-old boy
- CHARLES "BATCH" BATCHELOR**, Edison's chief assistant
- J.P. MORGAN**, a wealthy businessman
- MAMA**, Alfred's mother
- PAPA**, Alfred's father
- LILLIE**, Alfred's little sister
- MA EDISON**, Edison's mother
- PA EDISON**, Edison's father
- YOUNG TOM**, Edison as a boy

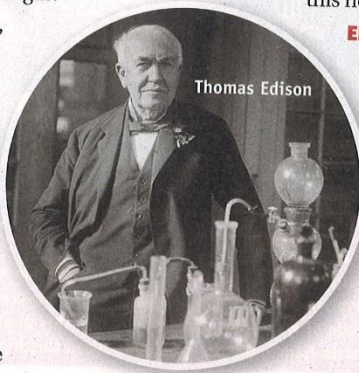
**AS YOU READ, THINK ABOUT:** How does light affect daily life?

**Prologue**

- H1:** In the 1870s, inventor Thomas Edison built a laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey.
- H2:** He hired a team of mechanics, mathematicians, blacksmiths, and engineers.
- H1:** In Edison's mind, to invent something, all you needed was a good imagination and a pile of junk.
- H2:** Edison and his men were on the cutting edge of technology.
- H1:** Back then, when the sun went down, the only light—other than that from the moon and stars—came from candles or lamps that burned oil or gas.
- H2:** Their open flames were hazardous, and created soot and **noxious** vapors.
- H1:** Edison was determined to solve these problems.

**Scene 1**

- N1:** Twelve-year-old Alfred is picking through the trash heap outside Edison's laboratory.
- N2:** A **disheveled** man comes out a side door. His hair is uncombed, and he



Thomas Edison

wears a rumpled blue suit.

**EDISON:** Hey there, boy. What have you got?

**N1:** Alfred slowly opens his hands.

**ALFRED** (*sheepishly*): Um, copper wire and glass tubing.

**EDISON:** What do you intend to do with this treasure?

**ALFRED:** I'm conducting experiments.

**EDISON:** A young scientist, are you?

**ALFRED:** Yes, sir. Someday I hope to be as good as Mr. Edison himself.

**EDISON:** Today may be your lucky day. Come with me.

**N2:** Edison takes Alfred into the lab. A wave of heat from the many gas lamps washes over them.

**N1:** The **acrid** smell of burning metal fills the air. Men huddle around worktables strewn with parts and tools.

**N2:** Alfred is mesmerized by the whirl of machines. The room is a hive of activity.

**N1:** Edison leads Alfred to a table covered with threads.

**EDISON:** Here's where the real action is. We are working on an incandescent lamp. Do you know what that is?

**ALFRED:** It's light that glows instead of flickers?

**EDISON:** That's right. We put a long, thin strand of some material into this glass bulb. That strand is called a filament. It heats and glows when electricity runs through it.

**N2:** Alfred watches a large, bearded man delicately handle a fiber from a coconut shell.

**BATCH:** Problem is, we can't find a filament that can take the heat. We've tried plants, paper, all kinds of metals—thousands of substances. Now we're trying this here coconut fiber.

**EDISON:** When you have **exhausted** all possibilities, remember this: You haven't. Right, Batch?

**BATCH:** Right, Boss.

**N1:** Alfred stares at Edison, dumbfounded.

**ALFRED:** You . . . you're the boss?

**N2:** Edison winks at Alfred and tips an imaginary hat.

**EDISON:** Mr. Edison, at your service.

VOLKER MOERHKE FOTOGRAFIE CGI (LIGHT BULB); BETTMANN/CORBIS (THOMAS EDISON)

## Scene 2

**N1:** Alfred starts helping Edison in his lab. He brings supplies, carries water, and runs errands.

**N2:** One day, Alfred is helping Batch clean up when J.P. Morgan, one of Edison's investors, arrives waving a newspaper.

**MORGAN:** Have you seen this headline? "Is Edison a Fraud?" See that? A fraud!

**EDISON:** It's a pleasure to see you too, J.P.

**MORGAN:** You said you were on the verge of making incandescent light. You claimed gaslight would soon be obsolete. That was a year ago!

**EDISON:** Electric light has turned out to be more complex than I anticipated.

**MORGAN:** Other scientists have already made working lamps.

**EDISON:** True, but they don't burn for more than a few minutes.

**MORGAN:** If someone else brings these lamps to market, it's the end of the line for us.

**EDISON:** We will succeed. We just need more time.

**MORGAN:** If you don't solve this soon, you'll get no more

money from me.

**EDISON:** I need to pay my men. They work 12 to 16 hours a day!

**MORGAN:** Seems like all you are paying them to do is fail.

**EDISON:** We have not failed. We have successfully found thousands of ways that won't work. Don't you see? Every failure is a step forward.

**MORGAN:** Every failure is a failure.

**N1:** Morgan storms off.

**ALFRED (to Batch):** Would he really give up on Mr. Edison?

**BATCH:** Morgan doesn't understand what experimentation is. He wants the end result, but he does not want the struggle it takes to get there.

The character of Alfred was inspired by a real person named David Trumbull Marshall. David often visited Edison's lab as a boy and was later hired by Edison.

## Scene 3

**N2:** At Alfred's home, Mama is teaching Lillie to make dinner. A large bandage is wrapped around Mama's right arm.

**MAMA:** Now, chop those potatoes in half and drop them



### THE LAMPLIGHTER

In the 1820s, cities across America began using gas lamps. Unlike today's electric lights, gas lamps had to be lit by hand before dark by so-called lamplighters. Gas lamps were far brighter than candles, but would seem dim to our eyes today. Gas lamps also created soot and the fumes gave people headaches.

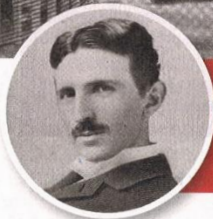
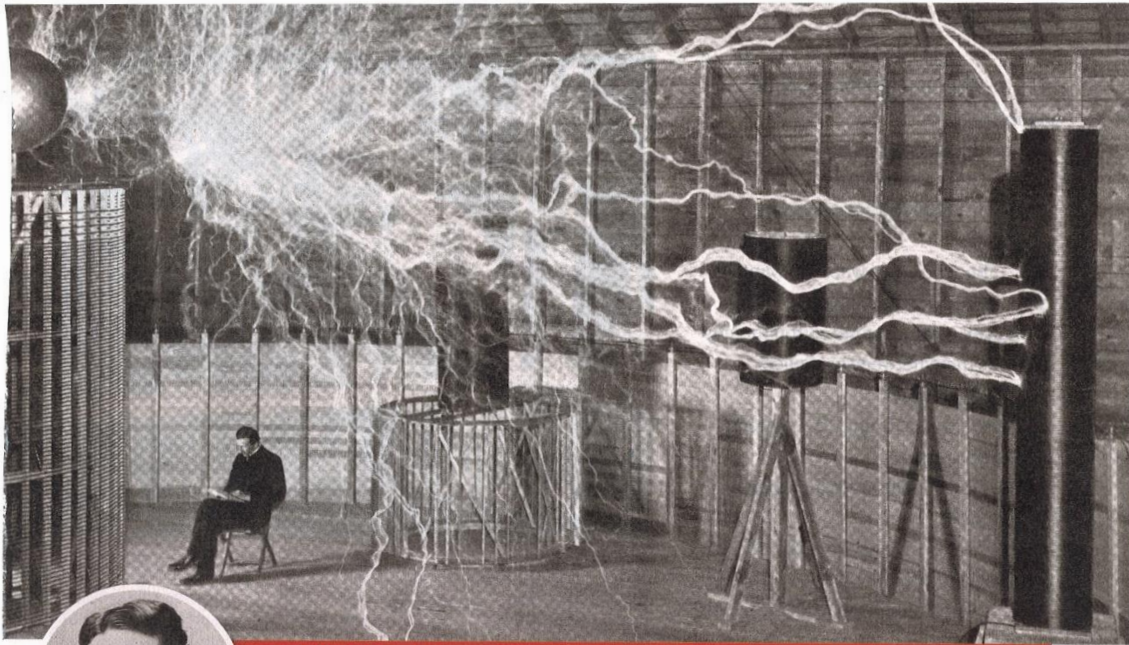


### DANGEROUS LIGHT

Frequent fires were a part of life before the widespread use of electricity. Accidents involving candles, gas lamps, and stoves were common. Many homes and buildings were made of wood that burned easily. In this photo of Rochester, New York, firefighters battle flames that eventually reduced this high-rise building to rubble.

BETTMANN/CORBIS; LAMPLIGHTER; GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE/GETTY IMAGES (FIRES)





### A TIME OF DISCOVERY

The 19th century was a period of innovation. Inventions from telephones to toilet paper emerged during this era. Nikola Tesla (left) was a great scientist. He conducted impressive experiments like the one shown above. Tesla invented the remote control, electric motors, and many other things we still use. Tesla worked for Edison but left due to clashing ideas and a disagreement about money.

CORBIS (TESLA'S LAB); SPPL/GETTY IMAGES (NIKOLA TESLA)

carefully into the boiling water.

**N1:** Papa comes in with an empty milk jug.

**PAPA:** Where's your brother, Lillie?

**LILLIE:** In the barn.

**N2:** Papa goes outside just as flames dart from the barn.

He grabs a bucket of water and rushes in.

**N1:** Alfred is swatting at a growing fire. Papa douses it.

**PAPA:** What in tarnation is going on in here?

**ALFRED (quietly):** I was burning pieces of fishing line, and the hay caught fire.

**PAPA:** What's all this about? You've been shirking your duties, Alfred, and I have had it with you.

**ALFRED:** Papa, I met Mr. Edison. He's making an electric lamp, and I'm going to help!

**PAPA:** You will do no such thing.

**ALFRED:** But Papa, I have to!

**PAPA:** What you have to do is go milk the cows!

**ALFRED:** Who cares about milking cows? Mama could have died in that fire! I saw it, Papa. The way the flames

engulfed her sleeve . . . It never would have happened if we had electric lights instead of oil.

**PAPA (softening):** It was a terrible accident, son, and I know you fret for your mama. But judging from this fire you started, electric lights will be just as dangerous.

**ALFRED:** They will be so much safer. No open flames, no dripping oil or leaking gas.

**PAPA:** Listen here! This experimenting will lead to nothing but trouble.

**ALFRED:** Please believe me, Papa. Mr. Edison is going to change the world!

**PAPA:** You will stop these experiments and that is my final word on the subject.

### Scene 4

**N2:** In the following months, doubts about Edison grow.

**N1:** Reporters write articles about his failures.

**N2:** But at the Menlo Park lab, Edison and his men continue the search for a suitable filament.



**EDISON:** How long did that piece of platinum last?

**N1:** Batch checks his notes.

**BATCH:** Thirty minutes.

**N2:** Batch steps away to answer the telephone.

**BATCH:** Boss, it's your wife. She wants to know when you'll be home.

**N1:** Edison picks up some cotton threads and rubs them between his fingers.

**EDISON:** Soon, soon . . .

**N2:** Edison works through the evening, forgetting to eat.

**N1:** His family, once again, has dinner without him.

**N2:** After a nap on a workbench, Edison pops back up, alert as ever.

**EDISON:** Batch, I've just had an idea. Let's get to work.

**BATCH:** Aren't you going home tonight?

**EDISON:** Nope. I work best while the world sleeps. You heading out?

**BATCH:** No, I am staying . . . and Boss? Even if the money stops coming, I will still be by your side.

### Scene 5

**N1:** In late October 1879, Edison and Batch make a breakthrough.

**BATCH:** I baked these cotton threads in the oven until they charred.

**EDISON:** Excellent. We'll use this carbonized cotton as a filament in the lamps we're testing tonight.

**BATCH:** OK. We've got filaments made of horsehair, paper dipped with tar, fishing line, red cedar, and cotton thread.

**N2:** Edison and Batch watch the lamps all night.

**EDISON:** Lamp Number 2 has gone out. It's 11 p.m.

**N1:** Batch writes down the time in his notebook.

**N2:** One by one, the other lamps short-circuit or grow so dim they can barely be seen.

**N1:** Except for the one with cotton thread.

**BATCH:** This one is still going strong.

**EDISON:** Let's turn up the power.



### A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Edison (above) wanted his inventions to make life easier. His light bulb did just that. It provided a clean and dependable source of light for the first time in history. Streetlights allowed people to enjoy nighttime walks without fear of what might be lurking in the shadows. And, unlike the dim flickers of gas lamps or candles, electric light seemed as clear and steady as daylight. Still, it would be decades before most homes in America used electric light.

**N2:** The lamp glows for another hour before the glass overheats and cracks.

**EDISON:** That's 13-and-a-half hours.

**BATCH:** The longest ever. We're on the right track.

**EDISON:** If we can make a lamp that lasts 13 hours, we can make one that lasts 100 hours.

### Scene 6

**N1:** Alfred comes to Edison's lab.

**EDISON:** Ah, my young scientist friend! Where have you been?

**ALFRED:** My papa told me I'm not supposed to come here anymore. I almost burned down our barn.

**EDISON (chuckling):** What were you doing?

**ALFRED:** Burning stuff, trying to find a filament for you.

**N2:** Edison thinks back to when he was Alfred's age. He is transported back to his childhood home in Ohio.

**N1:** Ma Edison sits in a chair, sewing by candlelight.

**MA EDISON:** What's that funny smell?

**PA EDISON:** Must be coming from the basement. Tom is down there experimenting with his chemicals.

**N2:** Just then, a deafening BOOM shakes the house.

**N1:** Young Tom runs up the basement stairs smiling, his hair slightly singed.

**YOUNG TOM:** I made hydrogen gas!

**PA EDISON:** One of these days, boy, you are going to blow up the whole house!

**N2:** Edison is brought back to reality by Batch handing him a newspaper.

**BATCH:** I thought you might want to see this headline.

**EDISON (reading):** "Edison's Light: The Great Inventor's Triumph in Electric Illumination." That's more like it.

**ALFRED:** I wish my father understood how life-changing this is.

**EDISON:** We've got a little something to show the world on New Year's Eve. Why don't you bring your family?

### Scene 7

**N1:** On the night of December 31, Alfred tells his family to bundle up.

**ALFRED:** We are going for a walk. I want to show you something amazing.

**LILLIE:** What is it?

**ALFRED:** It's a surprise.

**MAMA:** I'm not sure I like surprises.

**ALFRED:** You will like this one.

**N2:** They walk to the train station, where they see soft glowing lamps on tall poles lining the road.

**LILLIE:** What are those?

**ALFRED:** Electric lights. Aren't they beautiful?

**N1:** Mama walks toward the lights in awe.

**MAMA:** I've never seen anything like it.

**N2:** Alfred leads his family up the hill to Edison's lab, where rows of lamps illuminate the street. Warm, lovely light **emanates** from the lab.

**N1:** Edison comes to the door to greet them.

**EDISON:** Welcome, welcome. You must be Alfred's family.

**PAPA:** Sir, I'm absolutely **flabbergasted** by these lamps. They don't flicker or sputter or hiss.

**ALFRED:** I told you, Papa. Edison is a true genius.

**EDISON:** Genius, my young friend, is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.

**PAPA:** Well, your hard work has paid off.

**N2:** Alfred leads his family to a table where Batch is turning a lamp on and off.

**ALFRED:** See, these wires are clamped to that horseshoe-shaped filament. When the electricity flows through, the filament gets really hot and starts to glow.

**MAMA:** And that's what makes the light?

**ALFRED:** Yes, Mama. And it's so much cleaner and safer than oil or gas.

**EDISON (to Papa):** Your son has impressed me. I'd like to make him an official part of my team, if he is interested.

**N1:** Mama puts her arm around Alfred's shoulders.

Alfred is beaming.

**PAPA (with pride):** Son, I can see you have a bright future.

**EDISON:** We will find out what the world needs, then try hard to invent it. Right, Alfred?

**ALFRED:** Right, Boss. ●

### ▶ LIVING IN THE LIGHT

Today, the rising and setting of the sun no longer controls our lives—we work and play well into the night. The glow of excessive artificial light, called light pollution, is so strong that it prevents us from seeing most of the stars unless we are in a remote area. Light pollution can also interfere with the habits of nocturnal animals and the quality of our sleep.



PHOTOGRAPHER'S CHOICE/GETTY IMAGES (EARTH); GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM (CANDLE)

**TURN THE PAGE**  
to read what life was like without light.



Do you love animals? Read this article about elephants.

ESSAY



## Say Goodbye to the Elephants

America's biggest circus has decided to stop using elephants in its shows.

BY ADEE BRAUN

“Ladies and gentlemen, children of all ages . . . welcome to the Greatest Show on Earth!” So begins each performance of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus. And what a show it is! Dancers and clowns perform in the ring as acrobats flip and soar overhead. Stunt riders zoom motorcycles around inside a metal cage as jugglers toss flaming batons into the air.

But none of these performers are the real stars. The real stars of the show are the elephants. For

more than 140 years, crowds have gasped in awe as the enormous animals balance on two legs, cradle humans in their trunks, and, like a squad of 5-ton cheerleaders, create formations with one resting its front legs on another's back.

Soon, though, these beloved performers will be gone.

Ringling Bros. has announced

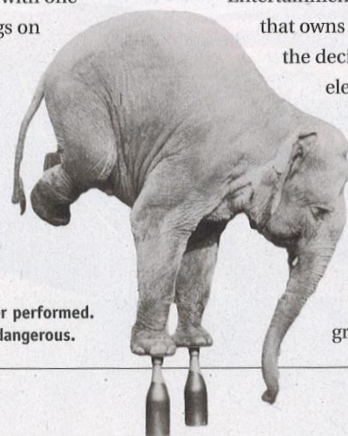
This trick is no longer performed. It is considered too dangerous.

that by 2018, elephants will no longer be part of the show.

### Mood Shift

According to Feld

Entertainment, the company that owns Ringling Bros., the decision to remove elephants from the circus was based on a “mood shift” among circus goers—a reference to the public’s growing unease



BERTRAND GUAY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (CIRCUS ELEPHANT); GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES (BALANCING)

with the idea of elephants performing for our entertainment. In fact, animal rights advocates have been calling for circuses to stop using elephants for decades. Many activists believe that wild animals should not be used for entertainment.

Some animal welfare organizations have accused Ringling Bros. of mistreating its elephants—of leaving them in chains for hours on end, for example, and of separating babies

from their mothers before they are ready. Ringling Bros. denies such accusations. On the contrary, says the company, all animals receive exceptional care. According to the Ringling Bros. website, the elephants are under the constant care of top-notch veterinarians, receive plenty of fresh food and water, and enjoy daily baths and exercise. “We’re very proud of our animal care,” says Stephen Payne of Feld Entertainment.

### What Do Elephants Want?

Once the 13 Asian elephants

currently performing with Ringling Bros. retire, they will go to an elephant conservation center in Florida that Ringling Bros. has operated since 1995. This 200-acre facility, dedicated to



As for the lions, tigers, and other animals in the circus, Ringling says it has no plans to retire them. But who knows? Ringling Bros. wants to please its customers. Perhaps the fate of these animals is up to us.

the conservation, breeding, and study of elephants, is currently home to about 40 Asian elephants. Some are retired from performing, while others are still growing up. Yet others, according to Ringling Bros., are there because

they were not comfortable performing—they did not want to join the circus and were not forced to do so.

It is no doubt true that some elephants take to performing more readily than others. But is it fair to suggest that any elephant would *want* to join the circus? In the wild, elephants travel up to 30 miles a day. They are highly social and intelligent creatures who greet each other by touching trunks, like a handshake; who protect sick and injured members of their herds and mourn their dead. Even though

conditions for circus elephants have greatly improved since the days of Jumbo in the 1880s, would an elephant ever choose to live in a stall, travel across the country by train, and perform tricks on command when it could be roaming the forests of its natural habitat?

### Wonder and Love

Ringling Bros. and others have argued that the elephant acts in the circus do more than **enthrall** audiences; they also educate the public about these magnificent animals and **cultivate** concern for their survival in the wild. And of the approximately 10 million people who attend a Ringling Bros. circus each year, many certainly do leave with a sense of wonder and love for the animal kingdom.

But perhaps we’ve come to understand that loving animals means setting them free. If we want to learn about elephants, there are plenty of videos on YouTube, not to mention hundreds of books and online articles that we can turn to.

As for Ringling Bros.? “We’ll miss the elephants,” says Payne. “But there are still going to be lots of reasons to come to the Greatest Show on Earth.” ●

### WRITING CONTEST

How have attitudes about wild animals changed since the time of Jumbo? Why might attitudes have changed? Answer both questions using information from both texts. Send your response to **ELEPHANT CONTEST**. Five winners will each get a copy of *The Zoo at the Edge of the World* by Eric Kahn Gale. See page 2 for details.

GET THIS  
ACTIVITY  
ONLINE



Are you interested in a career field that will help you do better in school AND make money? Read this article about jobs in technology.

### **Tech training program aims to help students climb**

By Fresno Bee, adapted by Newsela staff. 01.29.16

OROSI, Calif. — Emilio Isazaga says he hopes his education will get himself and his family “out of the struggle” to lead better lives.

The 17-year-old takes part in an after-school program called Tech Connect in Orosi. The yearlong program teaches students how to repair computers, prepare taxes and perform community service.

For many, the class is a chance at a brighter future. Every high school senior in Tech Connect has gone on to attend college. It's a great accomplishment, especially considering that 62 percent of adults in Orosi and nearby Cutler don't graduate from high school, compared to 32 percent throughout Tulare County, according to a 2013 survey.

### **Equal Opportunities For The Poor**

After he was inspired by a similar program in San Francisco, Miguel Castañeda started Tech Connect in 2009. Castañeda grew up in an agricultural city called Delano, California. He thought students who were raised in poorer rural areas should receive the same opportunities as those raised in wealthier areas.

“It's hard out here,” he says of Cutler-Orosi, adding that many people work as farm laborers for very little money and there are lots of gangs.

There are regularly more than 100 high school students in the Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District who apply for 30 slots in his Tech Connect class. Castañeda doesn't choose participants based on grade-point average. He looks for students with a passion, and a need, for learning.

Emilio is one of those young people. “Honestly,” Emilio says, “I've been through some things, you know? I'm trying to learn some things.”

### **A Father Figure**

Emilio's mother was forced to leave the United States because she had come to the country illegally. After she was deported to Mexico, Emilio and his younger sister moved in with his grandmother. Emilio broke the law and is currently under tight supervision. Despite his troubles, Emilio managed to graduate from high school two years early at age 16.

One of the reasons Emilio loves Tech Connect is because Castañeda has become a father figure.

Emilio sat in his classroom last week. Outside sirens could be heard screaming in the distance, surely an omen of someone in trouble.

Emilio says Tech Connect enables him to channel his energy in positive ways. “Right now, it's helping me stay out of those sirens, right? It will help me build some character, help out my people, you know? I feel like it's a good choice, to help out.”

*continue on next page*

## **Doing What It Takes To Help Others**

Tech Connect students are required to do community service. They clean up graffiti around town, feed the homeless and teach adults how to use computers. Starting again next month, students will volunteer doing taxes for low-income Orsi residents on Saturdays. Each year, all of Castaneda's students have become certified in tax preparation.

Castaneda also takes students on field trips to colleges, offers tutoring and helps connect them with jobs in the community. One of his students is Adylene Saucedo, 15, who says Castañeda is a great leader and "will do whatever he can to help you out."

Tech Connect is a California Services Employment Training (CSET) program that is also funded by the Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District and the Central Valley Community Foundation. Castañeda is also a senior program specialist for CSET.

"He's just really good at what he does," says Elizabeth Gonzalez. A grant writer who applies for government funds to help pay for the program, she watched Castañeda teach students about computer parts last week.

"This subject could be really boring, but as you can see, the kids are really engaged," Gonzales said. "He's just very giving, very giving."

## **Being A Role Model**

Emilio agrees that Castañeda is a role model. "Mr. Miguel, he's really nice to us, you know? So I think that's good for a teacher."

Emilio's classmates have a similar perspective.

"My family is so unstable right now," says Sara Rabadan, 17. "He doesn't give up on people. He literally told us, a couple of times, he's not going to give up – even if we put up the struggles. I think that's nice 'cuz there are parents that give up on you, ya know."

"He teaches us to help your community, help other people," says Christian Salacup, 15, "and by doing that, now it gives us at least a little bit of a habit to help others.

"He said in one of our first meetings that he had a rough past, bad people around him," Salacup added. "Even though he went through all of that, he was still able to find a way to help others and himself succeed."

## **Doing Some Good ... For A Change**

Emilio says he will likely attend a community college before transferring to a four-year college "if they want me." He's still deciding what he'd like to study, but he's sure the skills he's learned through Tech Connect will help him.

"Hopefully I get to get out of my struggle too, ya know, and will learn a little something along the way. And do some good for a change, right?"

Do you love a good mystery? Read this true crime story.

## WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED TO ELISA LAM?

By Drew van der Post on APRIL 24, 2015

Deaths and disappearances are an unfortunate reality of our society, with thousands occurring each year, a large proportion of which go unsolved.

Not many deaths and disappearances, however, play out like an eerie plot from a Hollywood horror film. The unfathomable strangeness surrounding the ultimately unresolved death of Elisa Lam makes one such case.

Elisa Lam was a 21-year-old Canadian student studying in Vancouver. In January 2013 she embarked, alone, on what she intended to be a tour of numerous cities on the west coast of the USA.

Beginning her holiday in San Diego, she visited the zoo and wrote about the city on her blog, then continued on, arriving in Los Angeles on the 26th of January. There, she checked into the Cecil Hotel.

After five days of sightseeing, Elisa was scheduled to check out and continue her journey to Santa Cruz. On this day though, her parents did not receive their daily phone call from their daughter. Finding this uncharacteristic of Elisa, they contacted the L.A. police to report her disappearance.

Hotel staff said she was alone on the morning of her disappearance, and the manager of a nearby bookstore, the last person to report seeing her alive, described her as “outgoing, very lively, very friendly,” having come in to buy gifts for her family.

Police proceeded to search the hotel with scent-tracking dogs, but were unable to search the building to a thorough extent, due to the absence of any probable cause a crime had been committed.

They found nothing.

On the 6th of February, the LAPD posted flyers around the neighborhood, urging anyone with any information to come forward. A week passed with no new leads, and then the case took its first sharp turn towards the bizarre.

On February 16, the LAPD released a surveillance video from the hotel, taken on the 1st of February. The unsettling video depicts Elisa in one of the hotel’s elevators, acting in an extremely bizarre manner. It shows her peeking in and out of the elevator, hiding in the corner, pressing multiple buttons and erratically gesturing and dancing in the hallway outside the elevator. She then exits the elevator, and the door slides closed and open several times before the video ends.

By the time of the video’s release, media attention around the case was ramping up. It emerged that the Cecil Hotel had a long history of criminal activity, including murders and suicide. The disappearance of a





young university student played heavily on the consciousness of the public, and the baffling and peculiar behavior shown in the elevator video spawned a myriad of theories on Elisa's disappearance, from drug intoxication, to mental disorders, and even demonic possession.

It was about this time that guests of the hotel began to complain of strange tasting, discolored water and low water pressure in their rooms. Employees began to investigate the plumbing of the building. This led them to a gruesome discovery in the water tanks on the roof of the building.

Inside one of the tanks, floating naked next to her clothes and belongings was the partially decomposed body of Elisa Lam.

The discovery of the body brought up more questions than it seemed to answer. The autopsy found no evidence of trauma or sexual assault, no traces of illicit drugs, and no evidence that Elisa had attempted suicide. It listed the death as accidental drowning.

The investigation ceased, but many vital questions remain unanswered. The water tanks in question were propped up on cement blocks without easy access, and had heavy, difficult to displace lids, which were found closed with the body inside. Access to the roof itself was locked and alarmed. How had Elisa managed to get up there, enter the tank and replace the lid all by herself?



The video remained a prominent source of confusion and discussion even after Elisa's body was found. Was her baffling behavior a result of a manic phase of her bipolar disorder? Many proposed a more sinister alternative; her movements can be explained as an interaction with another individual not visible in the video; a pursuer. Was someone else involved in her death? Interestingly enough, it appears the video may have been altered at some point before its release. The timestamp is obscured, some parts of the video appear slowed down, and nearly a minute of footage has been subtly removed mid-video.

Disturbingly, Elisa's blog remained active for many months after her death. Auto-posting features may explain this away, but Elisa's phone was never found after her death, suggesting an alternative source of these online updates.

Finally, uncanny parallels can be drawn between Elisa Lam's sad demise and the Hollywood horror film 'Dark Water'. The film follows the tenants of a building who experience black water coming from their taps and other eerie phenomena, culminating in the grisly discovery of the body of a girl decaying in the rooftop water tank. Weirder still, is that this movie was released in 2005, five years before Elisa's death.

So what on Earth happened to Elisa Lam? The mysterious circumstances and eerie evidence give rise to many theories, but without new information coming to light, we may never know.