



CK Reporter of the Week
Katherine Gagner, Boulder

'It really is good!'



After nearly forty years, the old cast (Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher and others) is back in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," to continue the saga.

But not only did the new director, J.J. Abrams, invite back the old cast members; he also brought on new ones, like Finn (John Boyega) the turncoat stormtrooper, who fights against the treacherous First Order, and Rey (Daisy Ridley) the female scavenger who has grown up poor on the desert planet Jakku and always dreamt of bigger things.

The story starts off 30 years after "Return of the Jedi," which ended with the Rebels defeating the evil Galactic Empire.

With the Empire in ruins, the Rebels have rebuilt the Republic and restored balance to the galaxy.

But, only a generation later, a new menace comes in hopes of again conquering the galaxy: The First Order, armed with legions of stormtroopers and a myriad of new weaponry.

They also have an alliance with Kyo Ren, a Sith following in Darth Vader's footsteps.

Meanwhile, the Resistance gains new allies in Finn and Rey, the new heroes of the franchise. Together, heroes new and old team up to defeat the diabolical First Order and once more restore balance to the galaxy.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being "The Phantom Menace" and 10 being "Return of the Jedi"), I would rank this movie a 9.5.

I was in constant awe of how great the CGI was. It was cool to see what a spaceship looks like in the original movies compared to one in the new movie.

Another great thing in the new movie was the acting. Never was there a moment where I questioned the dialogue or the skill of the acting. There are also many plot twists that keep you on the edge of your seat.

One new concept I think the writers were trying out was humor. I could compare the humor level to The Avengers: lots of lines contained quick-witted comebacks or an amusing comment muttered under a character's breath.

Anyone familiar with the original three Star Wars movies will find the plot line very familiar. For me, it felt a tad bit repetitive of the older movies, almost like a re-make.

In all, I loved this movie and recommend it to everyone.

This is one of the biggest cultural events in my young life, and I'm sure everyone will go see it regardless of whether it's any good. Happily, it really is good!

I hope everyone will be able to see this great movie and have a happy holiday break!



By Thomas Krumholz,
14, a CK Reporter
from Denver

Build your three-dimensional thinking skills

Plan ahead and be wise, or you might be the one getting Squashed!

In "Squashed," you roll the die and strategically move your colorful game pieces to dominate your opponents.

This new game looks a little odd, but I promise you it is entertaining and extremely fun for everyone ages 6 and up.

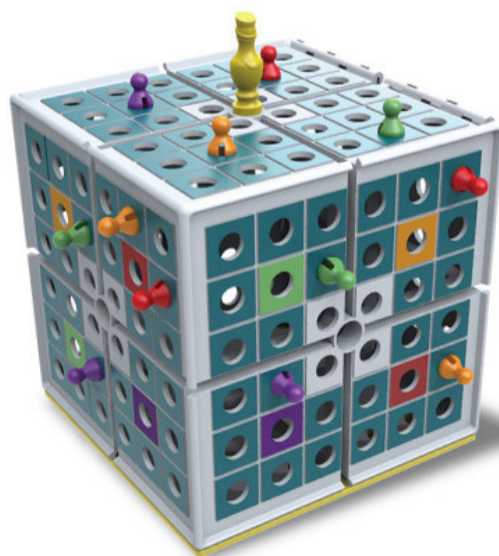
It has a unique game board, or should I say game-cube, that challenges competitors and creates a great time.

"Squashed" is a game of fun for 2 to 4 people. It's all about being the last piece standing.

On the cube-shaped game board, all six sides are active parts of the game.

Any player can move throughout all six sides, but if you get your piece to the center of any side, you get to flip the cube and squash all your opponents on that side in a total wipeout.

When you squash an opponent, you get to slam them into the center of the cube, which



is like game-piece jail, locking them inside for the rest of the game!

It's the first game I've seen that truly makes you think in 3D!

There is opportunity for collaboration with other players to take someone out, risks of taking out your own pawns to further yourself in the game, and rapid shifts of power!

My friends and I really love this game!

It's all about survival, and it's the kind of game you need to play to really understand.

Trust me when I say you need to buy this game.

"Squashed" is never the same game twice, and its fast-paced, quick-changing action keeps everyone on their toes.



By Kaiya Cox,
11, a CK Reporter
from Aurora

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Having the courage to be who you want to be

In “The Green Bicycle,” by Haifaa Al Mansour, eleven-year-old Wadjda desperately wants a bicycle to race her friend.

While on her way home one day, she sees a green bicycle in the toy store and thinks it would be perfect for her!

But in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, it is “improper” for girls to ride bikes. The type of Muslim culture there is very conservative when it comes to females.

Her parents say they will never buy her the bike of her dreams or will they?!

Wadjda tries earning money by doing things like selling bracelets, mix-tapes of banned music and by passing notes to neighborhood boys.

Nothing can stand between a girl and her dream; How would you feel if people told you that you couldn't follow your dreams?

Mansour is a Saudi Arabian who directs and screenwrites.

She was honored with an EDA Female Focus Award, which is given to recognize work done about women who are either in front or

behind the scenes.

This novel is based on “Wadja” the award-winning film that was written and directed by Mansour.

Although this novel is said to be for readers from ages 8 to 12, I think it is more for ages 10 to 12.

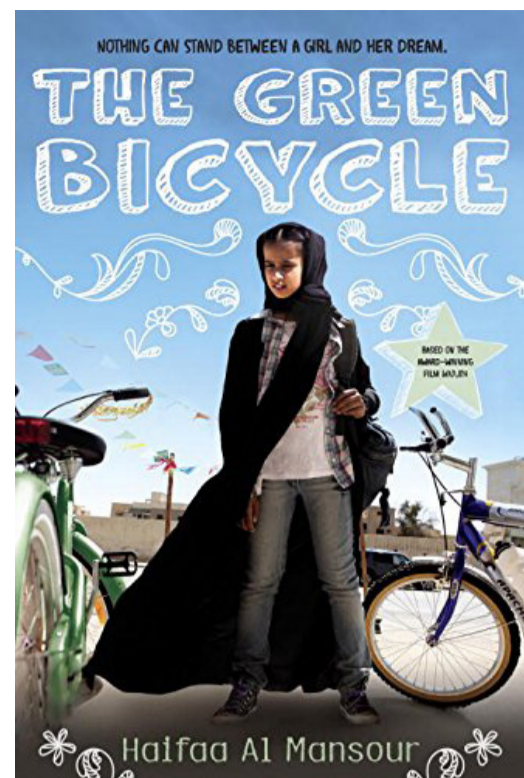
This may be a lengthy read but it provides a message that will help girls develop their self-esteem.

The author uses deep details to make the character stand out. She also uses hidden opinions and special emotions that only the careful reader will discover.

“The Green Bicycle” warms the heart while inspiring girls to be themselves.



By Natalia Zavaleta, 10, a CK Reporter from Lakewood



Hit the road with the Chipmunks



“Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Road Chip,” is a lively comedy for the entire family.

If you've seen other Alvin & the Chipmunks movies, you will notice a familiar theme: There is comedy, action and some sad emotions.

The chipmunks, Alvin (voiced by Justin Long), Simon (Matthew Gray Gubler), and Theodore (Jesse McCartney), have good intentions yet always seem to be getting into mischief.

Their mischief is creative and funny to watch.

Alvin is always starting trouble, Simon is very smart and warning everyone about danger, and Theodore just watches and eats a lot.

The core storyline is about Alvin, Simon, and Theodore trying to get to Miami to make sure Dave (Jason Lee) does not propose to his girlfriend.

The girlfriend has a son that they don't like because he is mean to them and they do not want him to become their brother.

They are also worried that Dave might not keep them if he gets married.

There is a crazy twist at the end but I won't spoil it for you.

There are a lot of intriguing and interesting scenes including escaping an air marshal, throwing a huge party, releasing wild animals on a plane, starting a bar fight, getting ditched in the middle of nowhere and causing lots of raucous action on the streets of New Orleans.

As you can see, the chipmunks travel quite a bit in this movie.

Despite not being an official musical, there is a lot of singing because they are musical sensations. The songs were fun and added a lot to the enjoyment of the movie.

This movie is rated G for all audiences. I really enjoyed this movie and highly recommend it.



By Tyler Vanourek, 13, a CK Reporter from Littleton

Worthy challenges for Ruby and for readers

The Chemystral Age is upon us and what comes to mind other than the year 1718 and colonial Philadelphia?

This was the beginning of alchemy and industrialization's reign on the world, and the setting for “A Riddle in Ruby” by Kent Davis.

For Pirate Princess, Aruba (Ruby) Teach, this is the time for her to look around, meddle in her father's affairs and disguise herself in order to pick locks and earn loot.

That is after all a pirate's life isn't it?

Especially when you live on your father's pirate ship, because there is a lot for a young brave girl to explore and find.

Yet, this all changes when she is pushed into a hidey-hole in order to keep away from the imminent danger, also known as the Royal Navy.

Ruby is crammed inside the hidey-hole in her father's ship with a stranger named Cram (get it?).

When she escapes the hidey-hole she finds her father and all of his crew members have been kidnapped.

She must acquire the help of Lord Athen and his faithful servant Cram in order to find her father.

As Aruba embarks on her journey she realizes that her father's ship wasn't just a form of transportation but is, in fact, a safeguard sheltering her from the outside world.

When she leaves her ship she finds herself trapped in a world full of nefarious societies with her aristocratic

partner, Lord Athen.

Will his power help them, or will Ruby never find her father and his crew?

Will they escape the crazy automatons and the Royal Navy of the era?

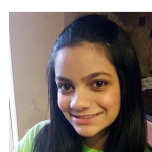
This book will continuously keep you on the edge of imagination!

With new adventures at every turn and twist, and new obstacles for Ruby to dodge, you will continue to follow her throughout the story until the last second.

However, it is advised that you sit with computer, dictionary or parent to thoroughly enjoy this book to its fullest potential: The words are slightly complex and technical, and require a bit of research.

But they add to the ambiance of the book, and thus, I do recommend this book to anyone from age ten up.

So grab this book, a dictionary and get reading!



By Sneha Muthe, 13, a CK Reporter from Highlands Ranch

Pricey but fun way to learn programming

The Dash and Dot robots are a great way to learn about programming.

If you choose to buy both of the robots, the kit will include Dash, Dot, a charging cord, and two building blocks.

When buying these robots you must keep in mind that a tablet is necessary. Some tablets will work better than others. An iPad mini or an iPad Air 2 will work fine.

There are four apps for download: Go!, Blockly, Path and Wonder.

There is also an app called Xylo, but the xylophone is sold separately.

Personally, I don't think that the xylophone or the other extra items are worth the money. Kids will be entertained by them for about a day, and then lose all interest.

As a 12-year-old, I enjoyed the Dash robot more than the Dot robot.

Most of the apps are dedicated to Dash (*recommended for ages 9-15*). The Go! app transforms Dash into a remote control toy.

Meanwhile, that app only allows you to control the sound produced by Dot.

Blockly and Path are also designed only for the Dash robot. Blockly

was my favorite app. It is like Scratch, only instead of the action occurring on the computer screen it occurs right in front of you.

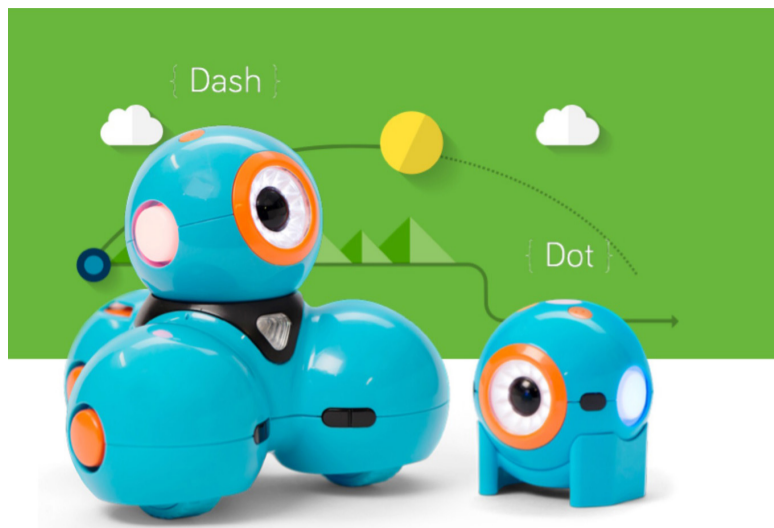
As with some of the other apps, coding challenges have already been designed.

Dot is suitable for younger audiences (ages 4-8). The Wonder app is a fantastic way to learn colors, numbers, and other basic things.

On the website it is stated that Dot can be used for Blockly. I tried to accomplish this but I couldn't get it to work.

Dash and Dot are a great choice for a holiday present.

Although, at about \$200 for the pair, these robots are expensive, if your child is interested in programming it is worth the money.



By Saloni Agarwal, 12, a CK Reporter from Centennial

They don't 'all do it.' In fact, fewer of them do.

If you hear some adult say how bad kids are today, you can point them to the latest study from the National Institute of Health.

And if you hear some kid say, "Come on, everybody does it," you can show them this study, too.

A nationwide survey of nearly 45,000 eighth, tenth and twelfth graders shows that, over the last 20 years, the number of students using alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs or misusing prescription drugs has gone down.

The best news seems to be with cigarettes, where use by 10th graders has fallen by half in the last five years, down to only 3.3 percent. Other tobacco news isn't that good, but it's not all bad.

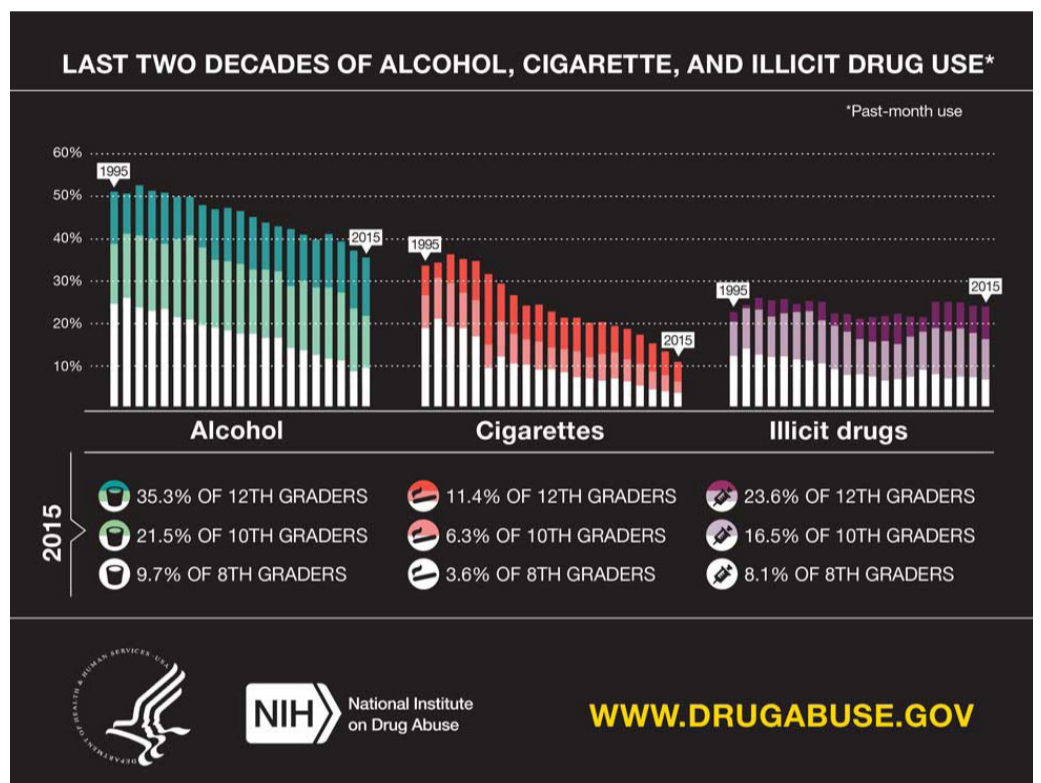
Use of marijuana hasn't gone down, which researchers said they found disturbing because of evidence that it harms young, developing brains.

However, use of pot hasn't increased, either, and researchers found that legalization of the drug doesn't seem to change how young people see it or the choices they make about it.

Alcohol use is going steadily down, and, even among seniors, who are closest to being of legal drinking age, fewer than one-fifth get drunk regularly, and the number who get drunk at all is strongly down from five years ago.

You can find a link to the study at ColoradoNIE.com. Show it to the next grownup who says today's kids are bad, and to any friends who say "They all do it."

Because they aren't, and they don't.



Sudoku

	1				
		3	1	6	
			2	5	
	2	1			
6		5			
				3	5

Rules: Every row across, every column down and each of the six smaller boxes must contain numerals 1,2,3,4,5 and 6, one time and one time only.
The solution to this week's puzzle is on Page 4.



Brainteaser

On this day in 1944, German forces in the Battle of the Bulge gave U.S. General Anthony MacAuliffe a chance to surrender. You get bonus points for finding out why our answers this week begin with "N."

1. A more formal name for your belly-button
2. In space, a huge cloudlike mass of dust, gas or both that may glow
3. A small bird seen walking up, down and around on tree trunks
4. Colorado city that is in both Adams and Weld counties
5. A fluffy flatbread from India now used in many Asian forms of cooking
6. Ballet by Tschaikovsky based on a German Christmas story
7. Town in which, according to the Bible, Jesus grew up
8. Slot in the end of an arrow that fits over the bowstring
9. Land in which children's fantasy books by C.S. Lewis take place
10. Active at night

(answers on Page Four)

Japan's court insists married couples must take the same last name

Japan's supreme court disappointed many women in Japan this past week by ruling that an old law requiring married couples to have the same last name is constitutional.

The women who had brought the case to court said it wasn't fair to require them to change their last names to get married.

The law, which dates from 1898, does not force women to take their husband's last name, but it does force the couple to choose one, and most couples choose the man's.

Few other developed nations have laws like Japan's, and there are a few where the law, or customs, make it common for women to keep their maiden names when they marry.

In Iceland, last names are based on the

father's first name. If your name were Anita Ólafsdottir, marriage wouldn't change that.

Canadian women in most provinces can make their own decision, except in Quebec, where people are required to use their birth names throughout life unless they go through a legal process to change it.

Some Japanese couples avoid the problem by not getting married at all, but this brings up other problems with laws on property and on parents' rights.

The court said it would be up to Japan's parliament to change the law.

That nearly happened in 1996, but a more conservative government came into power and blocked the change.



photo/Christian Habisreutinger

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Hot Links to Cool Sites!

NASA's Space Place
<http://tinyurl.com/ckspace>

NIE Special Report
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<http://tinyurl.com/ckgeography>

Pulse of the Planet
<http://tinyurl.com/ckpulseplanet>

How to become a NextGen Reporter!
<http://tinyurl.com/colokidsreporter>



To read the sources for these stories

Decreasing drug, tobacco and alcohol use

Japanese marriage and names

go to <http://www.tinyurl.com/ckstorylinks>

Sudoku Solution

4	1	6	5	2	3
2	5	3	1	6	4
3	6	4	2	5	1
5	2	1	3	4	6
6	3	5	4	1	2
1	4	2	6	3	5

Brainteaser Solution



(see Page Three)

10 right - Wow!

7 right - Great!

5 right - Good

3 right - See you next time!

1. navel 2. nebula 3. nuthatch 4. Northglenn
 5. naan 6. The Nutcracker 7. Nazareth
 8. nock 9. Narnia 10. nocturnal

Tales of the Ancient World

DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

Daedalus was the greatest engineer in all the Mediterranean.

King Minos of Crete was the greatest king in all the Mediterranean, but he had a big problem.

He had disrespected Neptune, the god of the oceans, and, in return, the angry god had given him a monster for a son: The flesh-eating Minotaur, with the head of a bull and the body of a man.

Minos had to find a safe place to keep this dangerous monster, and so he sent for Daedalus.

By the time the wise old engineer arrived on the island with his son, Icarus, he had figured out a solution to the king's problem: A great stone maze, the Labyrinth, that would act as the monster's home.

The people of Crete would be safe because the Minotaur would never be able to find his way out. And the Minotaur would be safe, because nobody could ever find his way in.

When the Labyrinth was completed, it was everything Daedalus had promised, and everything Minos had wished for.

In fact, as far as the king could see, there was only one security flaw in his new building: Daedalus.

In his bed at night, Minos lay awake and worried. Daedalus had designed the Labyrinth; that meant he knew its complicated twists and turns. Daedalus could betray Minos and give away the secrets of the maze.

Daedalus assured King Minos that even he could not find his way in and out of the Labyrinth, but the king did not trust his word.

He had Daedalus and Icarus put into the Labyrinth. If Daedalus knew the way out, he reasoned, the guards at the doors would capture him before he could escape. And if he truly could not find his way out, well, so much the better.

And so Daedalus and his son took up their residence in the maze, and Daedalus truly could not find a way through the twists and turns of the Labyrinth. But that did not mean he couldn't find a way to escape the king's trap.

He studied the birds of the air as they flew over the Labyrinth, and he began to gather their feathers.

Fortunately for him, he had been imprisoned with all his tools and the materials he had used to build models of the Labyrinth.

And so, alone with his son in the maze, Daedalus began to plan his escape.

Over several months, he carefully built two sets of enormous wings, with harnesses, one set made to his measurements, the other designed just for Icarus. And he covered the wings with feathers, held in place by bees wax.

As the project took shape, young Icarus became more excited. He watched the seagulls each day as they whirled and glided overhead, and imagined himself flying among them.

His father sometimes saw him standing, gazing up at the birds, and once again would say, "This is not a game, my son. It is serious business. If I thought we could live here, I would never risk our lives like this."

Icarus would nod, and promise his father to take their escape seriously. But then he would see another bird soar high overhead, and his thoughts would soar with it.

Finally, the day came when Daedalus put the final touches on the two great pairs of wings and climbed with them to the top of the Labyrinth's walls.

He slipped into his own harness, helped Icarus into his, and then fastened all the straps tightly.

"Listen carefully," he warned his son. "Follow me closely, because I have charted a course that will take us to safety.

"And, as you follow me, do not fly too high," the old man went on, "for the sun is hot and will melt the wax that holds the feathers to your wings. But do not fly too low, or the moist air of the ocean will gather on your wings and make them too heavy to fly."

They stepped from the wall, opening their wings, and the wind carried them upwards. Daedalus steadily moved his arms to keep the great wings flapping at the right speed.

But when he looked back, his eyes filled with horror. Icarus was flying in circles, looking first at the ground below and then up to the clouds above. Daedalus called to him, but the boy paid no attention.

Then, as his father watched helplessly, Icarus began to climb higher and higher into the air, laughing and circling joyously.

But as the boy flew closer to the sun, Daedalus saw what his son did not: One feather after another, floating in the air behind him, as the wax melted in the warm sun, and the wings began to fall apart.

At last, Icarus felt the change in his wings, but it was too late. A great cloud of feathers came off in the middle of the blue sky and the boy plunged down, down into the wine-dark sea that bears his name to this day.

And a sad old man slowly flew on to safety. When he finally landed, Daedalus built a temple to Apollo and put on its altar the great wings that he would never have the heart to fly with again.

retold by Mike Peterson, c. 2005 - illustrated by Dylan Meconis, c. 2005

For a teaching guide, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ckserial>

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