



Alfa Press Writing Team Wins First Place in First Inter-University Writing Competition With Winning Essay

“The Hidden Ethical Responsibilities of AI Programmers and Users”

Written by the English Department, Alfaisal University

The English Department at Alfaisal University is proud to announce that the Alfaisal Writing Team has won first place in the first Inter-University Writing Competition, organized and hosted by Prince Sultan University on April 15.

The team—Layan Mohammed Essa, Bannah Kseibi, and Yazan Rawas Kalahji—competed against teams from prestigious universities including Princess Noura Bint Abdulrahman University, Prince Sultan University, Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University, and Alyamamah University. Each team was challenged to craft a well-reasoned academic argumentative essay in English, ranging from 800 to 1200 words, within a strict two-hour time limit. The topic and related articles were provided at the start of the session to be used as supporting sources. The use of phones, AI, or the internet was strictly prohibited.

Essays were evaluated by a panel of impartial judges and scored according to a standardized rubric for academic argumentative writing. Judges assessed each submission for the clarity and strength of its argument, organization, use of evidence, and depth of reasoning—placing particular value on well-supported essays grounded in scientific research.

This year’s competition prompt focused on the ethics of artificial intelligence. The Alfaisal team responded with a compelling essay titled “The Hidden Ethical Responsibilities of AI Programmers and Users,” which argued that ethical accountability in AI development and use must be shared by both creators and consumers. The essay stood out for its clarity of argument, strong evidence, and rhetorical finesse.

Under the guidance of their coaches—Elizabeth Marnell, Professor of English and University Preparatory Program Co-Director, and Dr. Alma Villanueva, Assistant Professor of English—the team trained rigorously in the weeks leading up to the competition, including during Ramadan while fasting.

Layan, a first-year medical student, brings to the team a deep reverence for classical literature and a strong interest in creative writing. Bannah, a certified paraprofessional and second-year student majoring in human resources management with a minor in strategic communications, discovered her passion for storytelling at the age of four after teaching herself to read using Dr. Seuss books. Yazan, a first-year finance student in the College of Business, contributed his longstanding enthusiasm for reading and writing and was eager to showcase his rhetorical skills while working collaboratively with the team.

Reflecting on the experience, Layan shared how the three-month journey—filled with intensive training, academic pressures, and moments of doubt—ultimately became one of the most meaningful chapters of her university life. “We had worked tirelessly, practiced for countless hours, prayed with unwavering faith, and sacrificed so much—all culminating in that one thrilling, unforgettable moment,” she said. “That moment reminded me that success never just happens—it’s earned.”

For Bannah, the competition experience was both exhilarating and transformative. What began as casual team bonding quickly evolved into a rigorous training process, including sessions during Ramadan and weekly meetups at the mall to practice writing.

“Hearing our team announced as winners was surreal,” she recalled. “It was the proudest first for me—reading our essay aloud and realizing how far we’d come.”



(English Department, Alfaisal University)



Yazan described the journey as “an endeavor I shall not soon forget in this lifetime.” While the day of the competition came with nerves and emotional highs and lows, he reflected on it as a moment filled with “perseverance, passion, and purpose.” The friendships formed and skills developed, he noted, “will undoubtedly stay with us beyond this moment.”

The Alfaisal Writing Team earned top honors, receiving not only the first-place trophy but also a cash prize of 3,000 SAR, a winning plaque, and certificates of achievement. Their victory reflects both their individual talents and their remarkable teamwork, commitment, and resilience. The English Department and the broader Alfaisal University community celebrate this outstanding achievement with great pride.

Student bios:

Bannah, a certified paraprofessional and second-year HR management student with a minor in strategic communications, began writing at age four after teaching herself to read with Dr. Seuss books.

Layan, a first-year medical student with a profound reverence for classical literature and a deep interest in creative writing.

Yazan Kalahji, a first-year finance student in the College of Business. With a longstanding passion for both reading and writing, Yazan is ecstatic to participate in this competition to engage creatively with a team and showcase his rhetorical finesse.

Layan:

“It’s hard to believe how the past three months have flown by since I first joined Alfaisal’s Writing Team. From intensive two-hour writing sessions to the invaluable feedback of our incredible coaches, Dr. Alma and Professor Elizabeth, our training shaped us into better writers and stronger teammates. Balancing studying, exams, and training was exhausting at times, but the thought of my team, my coaches, and my university kept me going—I didn’t want to disappoint them or let their efforts go to waste.”

On competition day, we knew what to do, but the real pressure made everything feel more intense; still, the rhythm we built in practice and the support of my teammates grounded me. When Alfaisal University was finally announced as the first-place winner, we erupted with joy. We had worked tirelessly, practiced for countless hours, prayed with unwavering faith, and sacrificed so much. I’m endlessly grateful to our coaches, whose voices and advice echoed in my mind during the challenge, and to my incredible teammates who made it all possible. That moment reminded me that success never just happens—it’s earned.”

Bannah:

“Participating in the writing competition was such a fun and exciting experience. Training started off simple and fun, more like team bonding, but as the competition got closer, things grew intense and required 100% from all of us.”



“We met during Ramadan break with coaches and even practiced writing together weekly at a mall. Balancing it with coursework and exams was tough at times, but looking back, it was all worth it.”

During the day of the competition, we saw a lot during our visit at PSU. We were offered internship opportunities, and I even got to network with professors from other universities—definitely a step out of my comfort zone, but so rewarding. Hearing our team announced as winners was surreal, and reading our essay aloud was a proud first for me. I’m still riding the high of the win and replaying that moment in my head. As AU’s first writing team in our first competition, it was truly an epic win! Without a doubt, the highlight of my first two years here!”

Yazan:

“My experience working with the writing team has been nothing short of extraordinary—an endeavor I shall not soon forget in this lifetime. Under the thoughtful guidance of our exceptional coaches, we spent months working diligently, driven by a shared commitment to excellence. The day of the competition, though marked by nerves, tears, and panic attacks, was an unforgettable chapter of perseverance, passion, and purpose—one filled with pride and worthy of celebration. The bonds forged with my teammates, the challenges overcome, and the skills honed together will undoubtedly stay with us beyond this moment, leaving an indelible mark on us all.”

Honorable mention: The on standby alternate who was ready to come in last minute on competition day if one of the team members wasn’t able to make it due to an emergency situation: *Shama Parveen (right)*



Formula One: From Melbourne to Jeddah

Written by Reem Bin Muammar, Year 2 CoM

The 2025 Formula One season kicked off this March with an exciting opening race at the Melbourne circuit down under. It’s a whole new season of racing, featuring fresh exteriors, new faces, and an undeniable eagerness for competition and victory.

The Australian GP was a fusion of perspectives—not only from the audience but also from the drivers. While some kicked off the season with optimistic results, exemplified by McLaren’s Lando Norris and his remarkable first-place finish, others found themselves at the opposite end of the spectrum, dealing with unforeseen challenges that set them back.

While four-time World Champion Max Verstappen finished in second place at the Australian GP, his new Aussie teammate, Liam Lawson, made quite an impression in his debut race as an official Red Bull driver, finishing in fifteenth place. Although fifteenth place isn’t the result typically expected from the highly competitive Red Bull team, the team had decided to address the issue early by giving Lawson another opportunity to improve his performance at the Chinese GP. Unfortunately for Lawson, the Chinese GP became a turning point for his future with the team, sealing his transfer out of Red Bull. With one driver down and many races left, Red Bull turned to Yuki Tsunoda.

From China to Japan, Yuki Tsunoda’s hometown. Red Bull’s new driver made his official debut ironically in his home country of Japan, where he showed off his skills, not letting his new team down and earning himself enough votes to get him the driver of the day status. Three races into the season and deep into Asia, fans finally witnessed Max Verstappen’s first win—a late but significant victory for the driver. It may have come later than expected, but it was far from too late for another championship run.

With all the racing and the ever-changing leaderboard, you might find yourself lagging, scanning for Lewis Hamilton’s famous 44 next to the Mercedes logo. But then, you realize—this year, he’s Charles Leclerc’s new teammate, now driving for Ferrari. Lewis in red, who would’ve thought? Hamilton’s performance this season mirrors that of last season—



Source: Formula One website

—consistently remaining within the top ten. The only noticeable change? A shift from the German-engineered Mercedes power unit to the Italian-powered Ferrari engine.

News flash! McLaren is back in the double-podium club. This season hasn’t even reached its peak, and up until the Bahrain GP, McLaren’s Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri had already secured three double podium finishes. The team has evolved positively this year and the year before. They currently sit in first place in the constructors’ championship. With all the good news surrounding McLaren, tabloids focused on a potential rift between the two drivers. This buzz stems from Oscar Piastri’s excellent performance so far this season, with two first-place finishes in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, and his growing presence, potentially replacing his teammate in the battle for the 2025 Formula One World Championship. It’s becoming a McLaren family matter, one they’ll need to resolve before history repeats itself, much like the Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg feud.

The Saudi Arabian GP was extravagant, to say the least. The Jeddah Corniche Circuit had been modified ahead of April’s race, with changes made to enhance corners, safety, and the overall driving experience. In post-race interviews, Max Verstappen exclaimed the excitement he felt and how much he had enjoyed the race, appreciating the improvements made to the circuit. Despite all the improvements in circuit design, Formula One drivers are never immune to crashes. Yuki Tsunoda and his former Alpha Tauri teammate, Pierre Gasly, had an unlucky start, for they crashed into one another during the first lap of the race.

The first half of the season is coming in full throttle, with the glamorous Monaco GP atmosphere, the historic Monza GP, and the challenging Baku circuit all lined up, promising outstanding and dramatic results. While drivers have yet to fully grasp the potential of their car’s performance at this stage, they surely will, as points begin to pile up for some while remaining stagnant for others.

“I’ve always believed that you should never, ever give up, and you should always keep fighting even when there’s only a slightest chance.”
-Michael Schumacher



Intelligence of The Heart

Written by Sarah Ouassini, Year 1 CoB

My mother lost her own mother 22 years ago, back in 2003. Not knowing what it feels like to lose a mother, I used to ask her how it felt, the moment her mother left this world. And every single time, without fail, her answer was always the same: *"It felt like my heart was physically bleeding, like it was sliced clean in two."*

I couldn't grasp the idea that physical pain could be felt in the heart, when we're taught—over and over—that emotions and feelings reside and are felt in the brain. So, I went on a hunt. I was driven by my curiosity and wanted an answer to this question: What if the heart was more than what we've been taught to believe? It made me remember brain death cases where the brain shuts down and the heart often keeps beating.

This is for everyone who just thinks of the heart as a muscle and that emotions couldn't be related to it. Could it be that the heart is stronger? Could it be that it is more independent than we've been led to believe — while the brain, for all its complexity, is still dependent on the heart to pump the oxygen it needs to survive?

I'd like to take you on this research of mine by stepping into the historical perspective of the heart and how different philosophies and civilizations viewed it before us.

Throughout history, the heart has been seen as much more than a simple organ. In Ancient Egypt, it was regarded as both the motor of the body and the seat of intelligence, emotion, and memory — beliefs later echoed by Aristotle, who also claimed that the heart was the origin of the nerves. Similarly, in Chinese philosophy, the heart was equated to the universe and seen as the ruler of both the body and the state. Philosophers believed it to be the central faculty of cognition — responsible for thinking, knowing, and understanding — and held that if the heart was not in harmony, neither the body nor the person could survive. We could easily picture the heart as the monarch, the mind as the minister, and the body as the kingdom.

By the 15th century, doctors like Galen considered the heart to be nearly indestructible, believing it was not easily damaged or harmed. In the 17th century, William Harvey revolutionized medical understanding by describing the heart as the "king" and "sun" of the body. His work, *An Anatomical Study of the Motion of the Heart and of the Blood in Animals*, detailed the circulation of blood and introduced the groundbreaking concept of the heart functioning as a pump. This is where we lost touch with the philosophical aspect of the heart.

The modern era of cardiac surgery began in 1938, led by the pioneering work of Dr. Robert Gross. Decades later, in 1998, Michael DeBakey made history by implanting a battery-powered artificial heart, a milestone that pointed toward a future where artificial hearts could replace human ones.

Now that science and modern times have taken over, let us look at the scientific approaches that haven't yet conquered our educational books on the heart. Here are a few points that I wish to share:

- In 1983, the heart was reclassified as part of the hormonal system, thanks to its ability to produce several vital hormones.
- Dr. Armour's groundbreaking discovery revealed that the heart's nervous system houses around 40,000 neurons — known as sensory neurites — which actively communicate with the brain.

These neurons aren't just scattered randomly throughout the heart. They're organized into a sophisticated network, forming what scientists call the "intrinsic cardiac nervous system." This system is composed of several types of neurons, including sensory neurons (which gather information), interconnecting neurons (which process information), and motor neurons (which influence the heart's activity). The heart's nervous system doesn't just react to signals from the brain.

It can operate independently, making decisions and adjustments based on the information it receives directly from the body. This autonomy allows the heart to respond quickly to changing conditions, without always needing to "check in" with the brain first.

- The heart isn't just a pump; it possesses short-term memory, long-term memory, and even neuroplasticity — the remarkable ability to adapt and rewire itself.
- "Heart intelligence" is the term used to describe the heart's unique ability to synchronize all the systems in the body, elevating our state of awareness while bringing greater clarity and focus to our lives.
- The heart plays a powerful role in shaping our emotional intelligence. It has the ability to sense, process information, make decisions, and even demonstrate its own form of learning and memory — all while functioning independently from the brain. It is notable to acknowledge that the heart sends more information to the brain than the brain sends back.

Now taking a more religious approach to this modern discovery. The idea wasn't unknown to the Islamic world. The heart has been all along — for 1446 years — associated with being the most sacred part of our body. Similarly said by the Prophet Mohammad, Peace Be Upon Him:

"Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it becomes good (reformed), the whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart." (Sahih al-Bukhari 52, Book 2 Hadith 45)

What began as a child's curiosity to understand a mother's grief evolved into a profound journey — one that transformed everything I believed about the human heart and the mind. Across time, culture, science, and spirit, the heart has never been merely a pump. It is where memory, emotion, and even wisdom reside — a monarch that governs from within. As modern science starts to uncover what ancient civilizations, philosophies, and religions have long suggested. Sometimes to understand the most complex truths, we must return to the very beginning. And you shall remember:

The heart has its reasons which reason does not know. - **Blaise Pascal**

Sources:

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- NeuroLaunch, *Heart's Hidden Intelligence: Exploring the Concept of a 'Little Brain' in the Heart*

Stop, I Don't Want to Know

Written by Dr. Irene Chiotis, Assistant Professor of English

I don't want to know what lies ahead
What bitter tears I'll shed
But tell me about the echo of laughter
That my heart will be filled with after

Stop talking about wars that kill
And leaders that live for the thrill
But bring me a dove that's soft
To wrap my aching heart with cloth

Stop talking about which gender is better
I'm tired of showing who is more clever
But show me a man who does not want war
So, I can finally rest my womb without gore

I don't want to know who is richer
What social class he/she has entered
But show me compassion all around
Deep within without charging a pound

I do want to know if you will "sensible" become
For life is too short for many who are young...
Gambling souls seem so usual in our days
As if heroes must die for a song to be sung...



Gaza, Still Beating in Saudi Hearts Almost Two Years into War

Written by Samir Odeh, Year 2 CoM

More than 563 days have passed since the most recent onslaught on the Gaza Strip began. The most conservative estimates say that upwards of 50,000 Palestinians in the strip have been killed and many more missing or injured (1). Multiple organizations have labeled it a ‘genocide’ with the International Court of Justice stepping in (2). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not been idle: without a doubt, the people of Saudi Arabia have empathized with the Palestinians’ unimaginable suffering and have provided material support. Our very own Alfaisal students, being an essential part of our community have echoed these pains.

Most recently following the occupation’s termination of the ceasefire, the regime’s restriction of Gaza’s land, sea, and air borders have sealed off the entry of aid—perilously pushing the cordons near two-million inhabitants to severe food insecurity and depriving them of essential supplies such as medicines and shelter (3). As such, things in the Gaza Strip are more dire than ever before, especially for the most vulnerable populations such as children.



A Palestinian child in Gaza; Photo credits: Arab News via Agence France-Presse (2025)

Throughout the near-two-year siege of Gaza, Saudi Arabia—in addition to a massive humanitarian force from all around the world—has not been standing idle. Since things began, the King Salman Humanitarian Relief Centre–KSRelief began a national campaign soon after the attacks on Gaza in November 2023. Since then, the campaign has amassed almost 1,000,000 Saudi Riyals. Through the Saudi people’s kind endowment, it was able to (4, 5):

- send more than eight cargo ships and 60 planes of aid—totaling 8000 tons, containing food, medicine, and shelter;
- provide 20 ambulances;
- send in and airdrop nearly 40,000 meals; and
- support strategic on-the-ground organizations such as the ICRC, PCRC, and UNRWA with more than 60,000,000 Saudi riyals.

Nearer to home, at Alfaisal’s very own Culture Day this past semester, students from all backgrounds were welcomed in the Palestine pavilion and educated on various support programs championed by Saudi Arabia.

However, despite the gracious aid and stalwart support, the situation has become unbearable with the closure of key points of aid access. Gaza’s residents have almost nowhere to go with quickly evaporating “safe zones” that continue to suffer attack. As such, the situation in Gaza has become near catastrophic (6).

But there remains cause for hope: Saudi Arabia, along with fellow Arab states, has been mediating among all sides to quickly get through a ceasefire deal that can save lives and allow precious aid in. Just last week, Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister HH Prince Faisal bin Farhan, in a conference on Gaza, stated that “[Saudi Arabia] categorically rejects any proposal related to the displacement of Palestinians from their land” and that the entry of humanitarian aid cannot be conditioned to any political decision (7). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to hold firm in its political demands for a comprehensive ceasefire to the siege and a genuine political resolution for the people of Palestine.



Saudi Aid being unloaded in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula; Photo credits: Saudi Press Agency (2025)

Gaza has been and will continue to remain in our hearts, but also in our minds. We continue to gain strength from the unbreakable will of the land’s inhabitants who have withstood what no one could withstand. The Saudi people have and will continue to support their brethren in Gaza. Sending courage, from Riyadh to Gaza.

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AI Tools: A Blessing or A Curse?

Written by Hussam Eldin Mohamed, Year 2 CoE

Can you imagine? There are over 1400 AI tools available for aiding in various fields and work environments [1]. Lately, a considerable number of AI enthusiasts have urged for the usage of a well-known available AI tool, ChatGPT. In addition, they recommend ChatGPT Plus for individuals and a subscription to Pro for institutions. ChatGPT offers a robust solution for automating tasks, facilitating communication, and assisting with writing. However, one of its drawbacks is that it may produce outdated information, which can be a challenge in large-scale projects [2].

The ChatGPT interaction process occurs through entering the prompt into the model, and then the matching output is provided. However, this process isn't as simple as it sounds. Behind the scenes, 'conversational prompt injection' & 'primary prompt engineering' techniques aid the model in outputting the most efficient and accurate results through analyzing the previously entered data. Education, personal assistance, and information provision are some of the common uses of ChatGPT [3].

One of my favorite pros of ChatGPT is the time saved summarizing any non-mathematical discipline, like psychology, for instance, in which AI aids in the learning process. Furthermore, ChatGPT generates helpful multiple-choice questions, which have an in-exam occurring percentage of roughly 60-70%!

On the other hand, ChatGPT might sometimes provide misleading information or claim to be unaware of the answer to the entered question due to misinterpretation of the prompt entered by the user or the unclear prompt entered by the user.

I personally once faced an issue when I requested ChatGPT to generate an image during class even though I followed the prompt instructions precisely. Nowadays, academic integrity is one of the most heated ethical debates in our community. While some people claim it's pure plagiarism, nevertheless, those on the far other end of the spectrum consider it a tool engineers created to ease human life and support its use as long as it's credited [4].

In view of the above, ChatGPT is a complex model that assists us humans in various fields of life. It has its pros, like saving time, and cons, like misinterpretation of inputted prompts, which result in misleading or unavailable output. Debates about academic integrity and several other issues have been circulating since AI was first introduced. AI might evolve to cover various tasks and turn into a physical humanoid assistant too, easing our lives as humans and making it more efficient. Thus, isn't it high time that we developed AI instead of eradicating it?

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Found Poem: The Boy, The Mole, The Fox, and The Horse, written by Charlie Mackesy.

Excerpts Selected by Sarah Ouassini, Year 1 CoB

"Imagine how we would be if we were less afraid."

"One of our greatest freedoms is how we react to things."

"Sometimes I feel lost," said the boy.

"Me too," said the mole,

"but we love you, and love brings you home."

"I think everyone is just trying to get home," said the mole.

"Everyone is a bit scared," said the horse.

"But we are less scared together."

"Asking for help isn't giving up," said the horse.

"It's refusing to give up."

"Sometimes," said the horse.

"Sometimes what?" asked the boy.

"Sometimes just getting up and carrying on is brave and magnificent."



*"Is your glass half empty or half full?"
asked the mole.*

*"I think I'm grateful to have a glass,"
said the boy.*



Art and the Human Experience: The Metallic Thread of Fariha Faroon

Written by Rushdan Firdous, Year 4 CoM

The human experience is extraordinary. 117 billion minds. 117 billion lives. 117 billion threads that weave through the tapestry of time. Each one is unique to the other. Each with dreams fitting to their frame in time. Time and time again, from classical epics to exhilarating escapades, from transforming stone to shawl to taping fruit across gallery walls, humans have shouldered the graceful weight of a never-ending, yet extraordinary burden—the continuous creation of art. A truly Sisyphean task!

The lives of every artist glistened, their metallic threads, unlike the fabric of others, grabbing my attention as I looked for a story embroidered into the unwinding tapestry. But one caught my eye. A modern-age mortal, the spitting image of a classic aphorism personified.

"A Jack of All Trades is A Master of None, But Often Times Better Than A Master of One" – **William Shakespeare**

Fariha Faroon, an artist and influencer, has captivated the internet since starting @fari91designs and @cherrypickfari on Instagram and Facebook in 2012, gaining a followership of 4k by 2017, now standing at a whopping 25k followers. True to the saying, Fariha has interests across many areas in the field of art, from painting to crafting to fashion, and has been featured in newspapers and online forums, made appearances in YouTube videos, and even modelled for well-acclaimed local brands for a short while. All the while pursuing a juggling act, balancing her craft with her professional work, keeping up with her family dynamics, and honoring her family values.

Better identifying as a creativist, Fariha starts her projects with a receptive mindset, animating her immense love for the crafts and creating new pieces from scratch every single time. "It's about expression and innovation." Fariha rejoices when asked what being a creativist means to her: "I was in awe to realize how this word shares how one can be expressive in all forms." Her creative process is equally authentic to what she stands for. Being "easily enchanted by...the surroundings" of the different places she feels blessed to travel to, Fariha engages in raw conversations with the nature of the cities she visits, to name a few inspiring her most recent projects: AlUla, Abha, Diriyah, and Jeddah. With "pops of visuals" that come to her head, she sketches them down immediately—regardless of how abstract someone would comprehend her vision. From there, it's straight to her art station.

Homages to Saudi Arabia are found throughout most of her works. Fariha was delighted to talk about two of her most celebrated canvas pieces: 'Harmonious Jeddah' and 'Setting in Stone,' the former being an aerial view of the map of Jeddah, and the latter, a 3D plaster sculpture depicting a proud Saudi horseman at the forefront of Diriyah. To have realized both of these visual ideas to life, Fariha admits that learning to love and respect the process is what's key, no matter the time it takes.

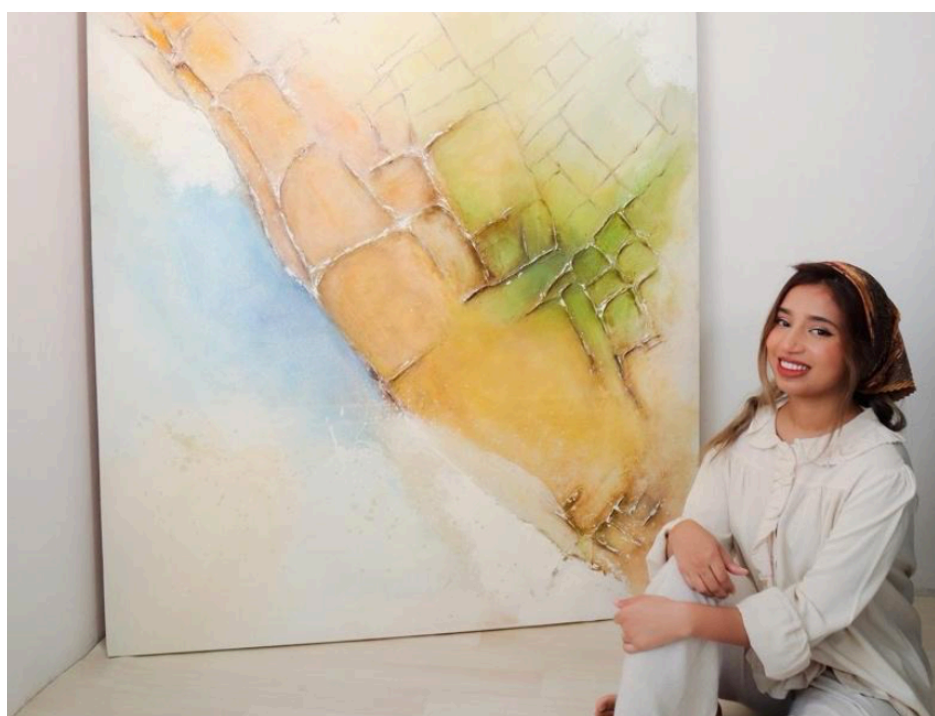
What has always been beautiful about this process is how it all comes together," she vowed; "I respect the process, I give it the time, and towards the end, it just comes out as it comes out."

"Her goals were clear with what she was expecting from the outcome. For the first piece, she wanted Jeddah, wanted an aerial view, and wanted texture. For the second one, she knew she wanted the horse to protrude out of the canvas, beyond being cast in stone. She knew she wanted to let the culture of the Saudi Founding Day vicariously breathe life into it, especially when the sun looked its way; she wanted to let the shadow take over where she stopped. That's what was intriguing about Fariha's conceptualization of ideas, thought processes, and their translation into her canvases. Drawing from her narrative, Fariha's intention is for the process to be "an honest journey in letting the piece discover itself," for each element to be subconsciously, seamlessly interwoven in the process.

Being an influencer for Fariha also falls within the same loop. In response to what inspired this, she recollects her mission: "I wanted to find people that resonate with the work I do—the kind of art that I do." That's where the human experience enters her scene. Being one, she understands how every human life is unique, each with desires, yet limited to what they can act on due to several reasons. Thus, by building the voice she has over her audience, her goal is to influence people to recognize their aspirations and feel all they can with her platform. Regardless of what each of her followers may resonate with or not, Fariha can cater to all, given time, connecting with each "as much as she can in whatever way she can give back." "You don't have to focus on one thing only. It's okay to take a few steps and test the waters," she encouraged. "Just live your life... (and) do things differently... With kindness, while setting healthy boundaries. That's all that matters."

Beyond the metallic sheen of the artistic thread of her life, Fariha is also an internal communications manager at a well-established organization in the country. The young Fariha was never the girl who knew that her field even existed. "But...life takes you accordingly." Joining her workplace 10 years ago, where she was recognized for her art, Fariha started with the company acquiring her paintings. They were inspired, took notice of her, and slowly, eventually, offered her a seat in their administration. Learning from the sphere she stepped into, be it good colleagues or great leaders, she praises her workplace for shaping her. "I used to find it, in the past, challenging to take on bigger tasks," she recalls. "They changed my perspective on undertaking...initiative." She also accepts how the stress of stepping into a field being young is not easy. "As you cruise through your career, you're still discovering yourself. You're discovering who the right people are. So, give yourself time, and if it works, it works."

Work turned the conversation to her studies. Holding a foundational level professional qualification from CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants) and a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Business Management, Fariha displayed humility as she reignited the stress that comes with the package. "I was afraid. I was questioning everything. I couldn't realize why until a while back. Because you finish school, and you're in that studying mindset. And then you come out and, in a way, pause." A realization many may have to face on their way out after graduating high school. All that exam stress out of the way, and the silence in coming to terms with how a whole part of your growth is done freezes you in a state of comprehension of what has passed, doubt in the present, and hope for what is to come. It was no different for Fariha. Blessed with a supportive family and good friends cheering her on with positive affirmations during college, she kept them close to her heart as she surfed the waves of that phase of her life, a constant source of gratitude and enduring support.



Harmonious Jeddah. Image shared by Fariha Faroon.

Over the years, the culmination of Fariha's decade-long dedication to her company, interactions with diverse personalities, and the gradual growth of her confidence paved the way for significant achievements during her time at work, including the establishment of the first-ever digital, interactive newsletter in her company. Wanting to keep her team informed of all things going on, using the resources she had available along with the backing of her leaders, she aimed to develop “something consistent, pushing out updates monthly, and something that has been consolidated well—a product that can be accessed in one click while being artistically pleasing to the eye.” And she did. All on her own.

Yet again, Fariha also visits the possibilities of not achieving something we desired and worked so hard for—for the wrong calls we made along the way: “It's okay to feel whatever regret you have. You are still human. You are allowed to feel. The important thing to focus on is what you can do next. Maybe what you chose wasn't the best decision. That's okay. The consequences followed. Now, how do we go about our lives? That must be our focus! Not to be stuck on what could've been done, but what we can do!”

Having a mature mindset, Fariha was intrigued to learn where these take root from. So, her thread was further unraveled. While her father would hold pride in saying how she would have had her leadership skills from a very young age, she doesn't believe so is the case. Though her parents' insistent role in her life would have had to be influential.

Being the eldest daughter among her three sisters, she has always been taught to be brave. Being brave for Fariha's parents also automatically meant she had to be able to take on certain roles. While three sisters in her picture are a definite blessing in her eyes, what magnifies the bravery imparted to them is that though there is an obvious lack of sons, the family couldn't feel the absence. Being the only male in the family, her father shared one ultimate message: be brave, stand up for yourself, and be equally responsible for taking care of each other. And they did that just right!

However, being the eldest sibling does come at a cost. But in Fariha's eyes, this was viewed as normal, as is the perspective of many brown households. “Although it is tough, I remind myself to take it as it is,” she exclaims; “I don't want to take it as a burden because...what can I do to change the course of my life?”

Fariha continues, “I'll only choose to see it as a privilege to take care of my family. It can be hard sometimes, but I love my family, and I'll do everything for them.” For her, what matters in this context is how everything funnels down to the family dynamics and the thoughts that drive every decision. She views each family as tending to their own: “To make it function, one has to see what resonates within their family, how their dynamics are, and what works for them.” Growing up in a family has its challenges. But so does a healthy work environment. And so does the tapestry of life. But the skills one picks up along the way can anticipate how well one can confront them. For Fariha, her strength is in her ability to forget—her double-edged sword. The kind of forgetting that allows her to move past obstacles without being weighed down. But also the kind that, at times, demands discipline and emotional strength to truly leave the past behind.

Fariha does not downplay how there are indeed no perfect families. On the other hand, she does not see that as a reason not to put her family on a pedestal. Through her lens, her parents are the ones who brought her into this world, in addition to the Islamic teachings she grew up with, “their safety, health, and wellbeing are what's important” to her and how she can repay her respect. For all our families do to get us to where we are now, the takeaway message is not to be individualistic but to try to go along with them, to love the whole package. As Fariha puts it, “No one is perfect, and neither is your family. Just love them for who they are. Love them the best way you can.” Given the time, understanding, and open conversations, there is every reason to believe in the healing of scars and the repair of flaws. The ever-expanding confines of our human shell bear a vast expanse within us to grow into, a wealth of knowledge to absorb, and a reservoir of patience ready to be cultivated.



Setting in Stone. Image shared by Fariha Faroon

With the aforementioned aphorism staying true throughout Fariha's thread, she has accomplished great achievements while sticking to her principles and, even more importantly, to the people she cherishes. A juggling act for sure. One worthy of a Sisyphean artist. A thread anyone is welcome to read, learn from, and apply to their unique human experience.



Understanding Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)

Written by Maria Bokeno, M.Ed, LPCC-S



Maria Bokeno, M.Ed, LPCC-S



Photo provided by stepaway

Note: All names in this story have been altered for privacy.

It was 10 years ago, 2:00 a.m., and I received an urgent phone call from the ER in the U.S. regarding an adult female having memory lapses and suicidal ideation... (*Story continues later on*)

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), formerly known as multiple personality disorder, is a complex psychological condition characterized by the presence of two or more distinct personality states—also called *alters*—that take control of a person's behavior at different times. This condition is usually rooted in severe trauma, especially during early childhood.

What Is Dissociative Identity Disorder?

According to the **Cleveland Clinic**, DID occurs when someone has multiple separate identities that control behavior at different times. These identities can have their own names, ages, genders, memories, and even physical characteristics like different handwriting or voices. Switching between identities often results in **amnesia** or gaps in memory—sometimes minutes, hours, or even days long.

The word *dissociate* means “to separate.” In the context of DID, this refers to a disconnection from reality, identity, memory, or emotion—usually as a way to mentally escape overwhelming trauma. The disorder is often a **coping mechanism** developed in response to prolonged abuse or extreme stress during early development. As a mental health practitioner, I often explain to patients that their “parts”—the alters—are not foreign beings but are **parts of themselves** created to help cope with traumatic experiences. These parts often play different roles: one might be a protector, another a childlike figure.

Symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder

The symptoms can vary depending on the person but often include:

- A sense of detachment from oneself and emotions.
- A confused or blurred sense of personal identity.
- Difficulty handling emotional or psychological stress.
- Gaps in memory—often referred to as “lost time.”
- Mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, self-harm, or suicidal thoughts.

Related Dissociative Disorders

The **American Psychiatric Association** identifies three primary types of dissociative disorders:

1. **Depersonalization/Derealization Disorder**—Feeling detached from oneself or surroundings.
2. **Dissociative Amnesia**—Inability to recall important information about oneself.
3. **Dissociative Identity Disorder**—Presence of two or more distinct personality states.

2:00 a.m.: I received a call from the ER in the US regarding an adult female having memory lapses and suicidal ideation. Therapeutic Case Report: Dissociative Identity Disorder Client. Name: Sarah (also presenting as “Stephanie”) Age: 34]

Setting: Emergency Room Consultation; Presenting Concern: Suicidal Ideation (SI) & Disorientation. Presenting Problem Sarah, a 34-year-old female, was brought to the emergency room after expressing suicidal ideations. Upon initial contact by the ER team, she reportedly repeated statements such as, “I really don’t remember why I am here and who brought me here.” Her behavior was described as regressive, and she exhibited child-like mannerisms. When I was called in for crisis intervention, she introduced herself as “Stephanie” and not Sarah. Despite ER documentation noting that she denies active suicidal ideation at this time, her presentation remained inconsistent with this denial.

Mental Status Examination (MSE): Appearance: mannerisms were notably child-like. Behavior: alternated between withdrawn and hypervigilant; displayed signs of emotional distress and disorientation. Mood/Affect: reported feeling “confused” and “scared”; affect was incongruent and labile at times. Speech: clear but somewhat pressured when in the “Stephanie” state; language and tone mimicked a younger individual. Thought Process: Disorganized at times, particularly when asked about identity or reason for the visit. Thought Content: Initially denied SI in the “Stephanie” state, but earlier reports and affect suggest otherwise. Clinical Observations: During the therapeutic encounter, a significant shift in Sarah’s personality structure was observed. The individual presenting as “Stephanie” displayed characteristics suggestive of a younger internal part, including childish language, a high-pitched voice, and referring to herself in the third person at times. There was notable amnesia when questions were directed toward Sarah’s adult responsibilities, relationships, or events that precipitated the ER visit. Diagnosis: Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) (F44.81 – DSM-5)

Rationale: The client exhibits key features of DID, including: Disruption of identity with marked discontinuity in sense of self and agency. Recurrent gaps in recall of everyday events, personal information, and/or traumatic events. Evidence of distinct personality states (i.e., Sarah and Stephanie). Behavioral manifestations of identity fragmentation. Severe distress and impaired functioning warranting clinical attention. Initial intervention established a grounding protocol using sensory cues (e.g., holding a cold object, asking orientation questions gently). Encouraged deep breathing and validated her distress without pressing for integration or clarity of identity at this stage. Coordinated with the ER physician and psychiatry for safety planning, ensuring she was not left unattended due to fluctuating risk. Recommended inpatient stabilization and trauma-informed evaluation. Treatment Recommendations Immediate: Psychiatric admission for stabilization and safety monitoring due to identity disorientation and history of SI.

Short-term: Begin trauma-informed psychotherapy with a clinician trained in dissociative disorders. Long-term: Structured DID treatment protocol, including ego state therapy parts work (e.g., internal family systems or similar), EMDR or somatic approaches as appropriate, psychoeducation on dissociation, and self-awareness practices. Prognosis: Hopeful with structured support, safety, and specialized therapy. Early engagement and stabilization are key to managing dissociation and addressing trauma.

Symptoms:

- Episodes of “losing time,” often lasting hours or an entire day.
- Different handwriting was found in her journal.
- Friends telling her about conversations she doesn’t recall.
- She occasionally hears voices inside her head, engaging in dialogue.
- Distinct changes in personality and mood that she doesn’t understand.

Therapy Process:

During therapy, Sarah began to identify four distinct **alters**:

- **Stephanie**, a 7-year-old child who appears during moments of stress or vulnerability.
- **Riley**, a teenage protector who is often aggressive or defensive.
- A maternal and nurturing presence.
- **Sarah**, the host or core personality, often unaware of the others.

Through trauma-focused therapy, grounding techniques, and Internal Family Systems (IFS) work, Sarah began to communicate with her parts, understand their roles, and integrate fragmented pieces of her identity. Over time, the goal is not necessarily to “eliminate” the alters but to achieve **co-consciousness**—a state where all parts can coexist and communicate effectively.



Inside the ASC: Conversations with Senior Consultants

Written by the Academic Success Center

An exclusive interview with two of our senior consultants, Momo and Sultan, about their roles, experiences, and insights at the Academic Success Center (ASC)

The Academic Success Center (ASC) is essential to student life, offering support and guidance. This semester, we're diving into the ASC with senior consultants from the College of Medicine, Momo and Sultan. These mentors have spent years helping their peers navigate university challenges. Read on for their insights, rewarding experiences, and how they balance it all while preparing for their futures.

Momo's Journey at the ASC

"I wanted to be on the other side of this—I want to help... in the way that was done for me."

We started by asking Momo about her first involvement with the ASC and her role as a senior consultant. Momo first visited the ASC in her first year for an English assignment. "The tutor was so helpful and made everything click for me," she recalls. That experience inspired her to apply to be a consultant. "I thought, I want to be on the other side of this—I want to help students understand things in the way that was done for me." Four semesters later, Momo is still passionate about helping others and supporting new consultants. "I love helping students, but I also feel responsible for making the new consultants feel welcome. I know how it feels to be new," she says.

Most rewarding aspect: "For me, it's when students come in anxious about a subject and by the end of the session, they're saying, 'This makes sense!' Helping them overcome stress is just as important as academic success," Momo shares. "Sometimes they'll open up about burnout and being able to remind them that they're not alone—that's powerful."

Memorable moment: "One student came to me believing she was bad at writing. She hated it and thought she was awful at it. We broke things down together, and a few weeks later, she came back, showing me the grade she got on her paper," Momo recalls. "It wasn't just about the grade—it was about how much she believed in herself. That moment stuck with me because I could see that her confidence had changed."

Balancing her studies with her role at the ASC: "The ASC lets us choose our shifts, so I can always adjust when I need to focus on exams or personal matters. Plus, teaching others actually helps me remember and understand the material better," Momo explains. "Explaining something to someone else is the best way to reinforce your own learning. It's a win-win!"

Advice to students who might feel hesitant to reach out: "Don't wait until you're struggling too much," Momo advises. "Everyone needs help at some point. Asking for support isn't a sign of weakness—it's a step toward making progress."

How ASC has influenced her future plans: Working at the ASC helped Momo discover her passion for teaching. "It's given me skills in communication and patience. I've learned how to guide others, how to connect with people with different learning styles. Now, I'm considering a master's and maybe even a teaching career," she shares. "Wherever I end up, I know I want to keep helping people learn and believe in themselves."

Sultan's Experience and Insights

"I want students to feel that they're not alone."

Sultan's journey to the ASC began with his own challenges as a first-year student. "I was struggling, and it took me a while to figure out how to navigate my studies. Once I got through it, I wanted to give back," he explains.



Momo (above)

Now, as a senior consultant, Sultan's role is not just about academics—it's also about providing peer-to-peer support. "I try to create a space where students can overcome their academic challenges and also manage the stress that comes with it," he says. "I want them to feel that they're not alone."



Sultan (below)

Most rewarding part: "It's incredible to see someone come in feeling overwhelmed and then watch them gain confidence and start improving in their studies. Knowing I helped them get there is what makes it all worth it," Sultan shares. "And the personal connections I build with students—that's something I truly value."

Memorable moment: "One student had failed her first year and was thinking of leaving. We sat down and had a lengthy conversation where I shared with her how I also struggled in my first year—and we talked about ways she could approach her studies differently," Sultan recalls. "A year later, she sent me a thank-you note, thanking me for my guidance. She had turned things around and was doing great," he remembers. "It was such a touching moment because it showed me how much a simple conversation and support can really change the course of someone's academic journey."

Balancing his studies with his role at the ASC: "Careful planning and time management are key," Sultan says. "I prioritize my tasks and stick to a schedule that lets me balance both. It's also about knowing when to step back if things are getting too overwhelming. The work I do at the ASC complements my studies in a way—it keeps me sharp and reinforces what I'm learning."

Advice to students who might feel hesitant to reach out: "Don't hesitate to ask for help. It's completely normal to feel overwhelmed, especially at the beginning. The most important thing is to recognize when you need support and take that step. Reaching out isn't a sign of failure—it's a sign of strength," Sultan encourages. "At the ASC, we are here to support you in a non-judgmental way."

How ASC has shaped his future: "It made me realize how much I enjoy helping others succeed and how rewarding it can be to guide someone through a difficult time," he says. "It's deepened my desire to support people—not just as a doctor, but as a mentor and leader. I want to carry this mindset into my medical career, where I can help people and empower them to succeed in their own lives."

The Academic Success Center is open and available to all Alfaisal students and provides tutoring and course consultations free of charge, both online and in person. Come visit us in the library (3rd floor, male and female sides) or check out the ASC website and make an appointment to get help with an assignment or prep for your exams today! <https://asc.alfaisal.edu/>



The Saudi Cup

Written by Reem Bin Muammar, 2nd Year, COM

This past February, I had the incredible privilege of being invited to attend the 2025 Saudi Cup. The Saudi Cup is a prestigious, culturally rich horse racing event held annually at the King Abdulaziz Racetrack in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Since its inception in 2020, the Saudi Cup has attracted world-class horses, strategic jockeys, and top-notch trainers from around the globe, thanks to its multi-million Saudi Riyal prize pool.

As I witnessed during my visit, the Saudi Cup was an event for everyone to savor and enjoy. It was a true celebration of sport, passion, culture, and admired fashion. My trip to the event wasn't my first exposure to horses or racing—I knew what a horse was, of course, and I was familiar with the concept of racing—but I had always associated racing with race cars, never really with horses. I used to think of horses more for transportation or as graceful animals that added a sense of life and beauty to the world, but during the Saudi Cup, I came to realize that horses race far better than any machine. Watching them thunder toward the finish line, powered by glucose and pure will, moving with strength and elegance—it was mesmerizing. There was no roaring engine noise, just the rhythmic pounding of hooves against the earth. It was powerful, organic, and raw.

After watching my very first horse race, I found myself completely captivated, so much so that I didn't understand much of what was going on. I wanted to learn how it all worked. I wanted to be able to read the room—to know why one group of people looked disappointed while another erupted in cheers.

I was seated at a generous table, within easy reach of Saudi coffee, a plate of chocolates, dates, and a horse racing manual. I reached for the manual, which I later realized held all the information I needed to better understand and connect with the atmosphere around me. The manual was thick, filled with pages detailing the race schedule across the weekend and specific information about the horses competing.



(The Saudi Cup Website)

It was neatly sectioned, providing insights into the breed, strength, jockey (also called a “rider”), and owner of each horse. Horses from all over the world had gathered to race in the Saudi Cup, many with unique and creative names. One of the most striking was Hong Kong's gem of a racehorse, Romantic Warrior, who ultimately took home the grand victory.

Internationally, horses and racing are celebrated through various derbies and stakes, where attendees come dressed peculiarly and extravagantly, turning these events into spectacles of both sport and style. The Kentucky Derby is known for its springtime, color-coordinated attire, and flamboyant hats and accessories. Similarly, the Saudi Cup showcased some of the most remarkable, culturally enriched outfits created by Saudi designers nationwide. The attire at the Saudi Cup featured pieces intricate in symbolism, paying homage to the many provinces of Saudi Arabia. I had thankfully understood the memo—arriving in a Najdi-inspired outfit, proudly reflecting my rich heritage.

Though this was my first time attending the Saudi Cup, it certainly won't be my last—I plan to attend every year, as the event was hosted with exceptional hospitality, generosity, and much-needed enthusiasm. I found horse racing to be portrayed in such a culturally vibrant way when hosted in Saudi Arabia, birthplace of the magnificent Arabian steed. The Saudi Cup fully delivered everything I had hoped for and more! Perhaps, in a few years, when I've grown my stable of horses with some of the best trainers and jockeys, I might consider entering the race with my own team.

Words of the Day:

Written by the Alfa Press Team

Misophonia – A strong emotional reaction (like anger or anxiety) to specific sounds, such as chewing or tapping.

Bootstrapping – Starting a business with little to no external funding, relying on personal finances and internal revenue.

Spolia – Refers to reused building materials or decorative sculpture from older structures that are incorporated into new buildings. This practice was common in ancient and medieval architecture, where materials from ruined buildings were repurposed for new construction—often with symbolic or economic intent.

Pharmacovigilance – The science of monitoring, assessing, and preventing adverse effects of medicines after they are released on the market.

Zugzwang – Though originally from chess, it's used in game theory and decision-making problems where any move worsens the player's position.

Dysphagia – Difficulty or discomfort in swallowing, often caused by various medical conditions like stroke or esophageal disorders.

Flutter – A self-excited and potentially destructive vibration, especially in aerospace structures like wings or turbine blades.

In medias res – A narrative technique where the story begins in the middle of the action, rather than at the beginning.



THREE MINUTES IS ALL IT TAKES!

Written by Dr. Maren Sophie El-Tayeb, Professor of German



Ms. Aljohara Abatain

Share your breakthrough idea – and join a global movement of innovation!

Are you a student or early-career professional with a vision that could help solve one of today's biggest challenges? Then Falling Walls Lab Riyadh is your stage! In just three minutes, you get the chance to present your breakthrough idea to a high-level jury—and the world.

Every year, 2500+ applications from over 100 countries prove one thing: innovation knows no borders. Hosted by 74 international Labs in 58 countries, Falling Walls Lab brings together the most promising minds from all disciplines—from science and engineering to business, social sciences, and the arts.

Falling Walls Lab Riyadh—where bold ideas take the stage

Last year marked a major milestone: for the first time ever, Falling Walls Lab Riyadh was hosted at Alfaisal University—and what an inspiring debut it was!

Seven outstanding students and early-career professionals from diverse fields stepped into the spotlight, each given just three minutes to present their breakthrough idea. The result? A vibrant, energetic atmosphere full of innovation, ambition, and fresh perspectives.

Our expert jury had the tough job of selecting the winner—and in the end, **Ms. Aljohara Abatain**, a senior researcher, took the top spot. Her success earned her a fully funded 5-day trip to Berlin, where she represented Riyadh at the Global Finale of Falling Walls Lab on 7 November 2024.

In Berlin, Aljohara had the opportunity to pitch her idea on a global stage, in front of experts and leaders from the world's most renowned foundations, research institutions, and global policy makers. An unforgettable moment—and just the beginning of her journey. Dear Aljohara, please take us on your journey to Berlin on the Grand Falling Walls Lab stage and tell us about your experience.

How long did you stay in Berlin, and how was the overall organization of the event and your stay?

I spent five days in Berlin as part of the Falling Walls Lab and Science Summit. The event was organized and rich in content. It began with a welcoming event with a science communication workshop led by Springer Nature at the Italian Embassy. On the following day, DAAD hosted a science excursion and information session at the Henry Ford Building of Freie Universität Berlin, where we visited nearby laboratories and had engaging discussions with local scientists—

—gaining insight into ongoing research at one of Germany's leading universities. The final three days were dedicated to the Falling Walls Science Summit, where global thinkers and pioneers shared their breakthroughs across many fields.

My pitch was scheduled on the second day of the summit. The coordination, hospitality, and quality of the program exceeded expectations. Beyond the program, the city itself was vibrant, full of history, and rich in beautiful architecture. I stayed two extra days to explore Berlin and visited a few museums, which made the trip even more memorable.

What was your experience like on stage, presenting your research in a three-minute pitch to a global audience?

Ms. Aljohara Abatain

Standing on stage was a mix of nerves and excitement, where years of research had to be shrunk into a three-minute moment. To put my message across, I had to clarify my scientific knowledge so I could connect emotionally and intellectually with the global audience. Although challenging, it was one of the most empowering and rewarding moments of my career.

In Berlin, you had the opportunity to meet people from around the world—including presenters, researchers, and stakeholders. Could you share a particularly memorable encounter with us?

One memorable encounter was with Sara, a fellow Falling Walls winner from Italy who works in electroanalytical chemistry and chirality. Even though we come from different backgrounds, we connected instantly over shared challenges and values. She quickly became a dear friend. It reminded me that Falling Walls isn't just a summit; it's a space for real, lasting connections.

What happened with your project on gene therapy research after your trip? How is your work progressing, and were you able to connect with any interested researchers?

After Berlin, we continued developing our next-generation lipid nanoparticle-based gene therapy targeting inherited blindness. We have now reached the second stage of preclinical testing using disease models. While we didn't secure partnerships directly from the summit, we're still pushing forward and have started conversations with international collaborators. The goal remains the same: to take this therapy to clinical trials and make inherited blindness a problem of the past.

What advice would you give to someone interested in applying for the next Falling Walls Lab in 2025?

Focus on the "breaking the wall" message, and be clear about the problem you're solving. Practice your pitch with people outside your field to make sure it's understandable and engaging. Falling Walls is more than a competition; it's a global platform that brings innovators together. So don't hesitate and take the leap. It's a chance to grow, be inspired, and join a community that believes in science as a force for change.

Next, up—A huge congratulations as well to Abdul Rahman Sukar, a talented medical student who took home 2nd prize. His powerful presentation, *Breaking the Wall of Parkinson's Disease in Female Patients*, captured hearts and minds—and reminded us why **Falling Walls Lab** exists: to spotlight the voices and ideas that can drive real change.

We interviewed Abdul Rahman about his experience:



What motivated you to apply for the Falling Walls Lab Riyadh 2024?

I saw it as a great opportunity to share one of my research ideas—something I truly believe deserves more attention and focus. Also, getting the chance to participate in a public speaking event is always exciting and a great way to grow.

How did you prepare for the event and your pitch?

I watched several videos about the Falling Walls Lab and learned more about the event. I also explored the pitches of previous global winners to understand what makes a presentation stand out and what it takes to win.



Mr. Abdulrahman Sukar

How did you find the Lab's organization?

The organization made my experience smooth and instructive. Also, bringing in a public speaking expert, English Professor Dr. Alice Kenney, to help us improve our presentation skills was incredibly valuable and efficient.

Do you remember how you felt on stage?

Absolutely, I can still feel the mix of stress, excitement, and the strong urge to deliver my idea as perfectly as possible in just three minutes. It was a unique and unforgettable experience, and I'd definitely love to do it again.

You won 2nd place. How did things continue for you and your project on the topic of *Breaking the Wall of Parkinson's Disease in Female Patients?*

Alhamdulillah, my project is now in the publication phase. I hope that it will contribute meaningful insight to the field of Parkinson's disease, especially regarding its impact on women.

This year, the Falling Walls Lab Riyadh is taking place again at Alfaisal University. What advice would you give to those who are interested in participating in a science slam?

Go for it, and don't hesitate. I promise it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience that everyone should go through. It will truly teach you how much a single minute of your time is worth and help you grow both as a researcher and a speaker.

Thank you, Abdul Rahman, for sharing your experience as a presenter. And to everyone with a bold idea: Apply now!

For inquiries and organizational questions, please address the Lab organizer Maren Sophie El Tayeb via email: mtayeb@alfaisal.edu

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Students attend AUEP

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Students attend AUEP

Mark Your Calendars for 2025!

Registration for summer 2025 has begun. 🇲🇸 For more details, visit: auep.alfaisal.edu/en



It is Valentine's Day

Written by Dr. Irene Chiotis, Assistant Professor of English



Abduhu and Dr. Laura

It is Valentine's Day... early in the morning... I park my car... walk into Alfaisal Uni... stop at Dunkin Donuts for my coffee... the hallways ... still quiet... I take my coffee, and while walking to my office, I take a deep breath and pray to God to lead me to the next person I will interview for The Alfaisal Press's Sixth Issue. Open my office door... turn the lights on... in comes my colleague Amber... starts talking about our students.

A few minutes later, in pops a student with a bag of chocolates. He excitedly extends the bag and tells my colleague Amber to take one and then offers me a chocolate also.

“Excuse me... Why are you giving us chocolates?”
 “For Valentine’s Day!”
 “But...why?”

And so have I found my next person to interview...

Abduhu is of Pakistani culture, raised in England, educated in British schools... bicultural...bilingual... his life seems perfect until I sense a touch of sadness when talking about his family... two brothers who passed away due to a genetic neurological condition at the ages of 3 months and 2 years old. Abduhu was young then. His memories are scattered...pain...visiting graves...congealed with the comfort and protection of his family. He never forgets...it has marked him.

But through what might have been unbearable for another person, for Abduhu it opened up a world in him..."of appreciation"...of "nothing is promised for tomorrow," "everybody needs to connect because you never know..." and "we need to say 'I love you to each other more often.'" He looks at the world as needing to be reminded that we are all the same, all equal, and if we can only give the opportunity to know each other, the world would be a better place to live in. If only we can look and then remind... as he did in high school by asking each student what their favorite color is and then giving each a rose with their favorite color card... the connection was made... we look at each other differently... we learn to love again...too appreciate again... with just a little bit of reason... the chocolate on Valentine's Day.

And so his decision for medicine. He doesn't want others to suffer what his family did, and so he chose neurology. He wants to connect and try to lessen the heartache of what humans go through in this world's game. He wants to show that "he sees the other person; he feels the other person...he's got the other person."

[illegible]

And in a whisper he describes his car rides with his father and the moon and the whispertell his describes his car rides with his father and he him, but yet he only tells his father would get back at us 'him, that Beloved the Pakistani culture only responds to love would get back at us 'I am felt' in But in the Paki War, acting words of love are not heard, they are felt more than said. With acting you can say it; you can hear it...

I ask Abduhu to move forward in his life with his imagination, to imagine the last Abduhu of his life and what in his life with his imagination would bring him the last “dash” of his life and how he would realize that we all have the same desires and just enjoy life.”

“What would you want to say to your parents one last time?” I ask him.
 “Thank you for the comfort, for the protection, and for the constant love
 you have shown me.”

One last question, Abduhu. “Where would you give that last chocolate?”
 “To my wife...”

When he leaves my office I feel calm and hopeful about humanity and for some reason I return my office I feel calm and hopeful about humanity and for loved me constantly rejust as Shakespeare had once said "It's all about being loved...constantly... just as Shakespeare had once written...."

Love is not love which
alters when it alteration
finds; love alters not with
his brief hours and weeks,
but bears it out even to the
edge of doom.

William Shakespeare



New English Minor in Strategic Communication: Make Your Electives Work for You!

Written by the English Department, Alfaisal University

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- Stand out in Business, Engineering & Life Science
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Interested? Contact advisors **Amber Ragland** and **John Fulghum** (aragland@alfaisal.edu) (jfulghum@alfaisal.edu) about how to enroll today!

Courses Offered in the Minor:

ENG 301	Communication for Leaders	3 Credit Hours
Great leadership is impossible without great communication. In this course, students will learn how to communicate an institution's goals and vision to a team; how to understand, persuade, and motivate people; how to handle conflict; and how to use communication skills to optimize their working environment. This is a highly interactive course that uses case studies, role play, video posts, and seminar-style discussion groups to help students build the strong communication skillset they will need to be the next generation of great leaders.		
Pre-requisites:		MGT 201 or ENG 222

ENG 302	Artificial Intelligence and Digital Media	3 Credit Hours
New technologies are constantly making our communication tasks both easier and more complicated. Students will learn about a variety of digital media resources for communication. They will become familiar with AI-driven communication tools, including ChatGPT, social media algorithms, speech analysis, chatbots, and many other tools. Interactive class discussions as well as firsthand exploration of these tools will help students understand the incredible power as well as the challenges and limitations of using digital media and artificial intelligence for communication.		
Pre-requisites:		MGT 201 or ENG 222

ENG 401	Audience and Market Analysis: Writing UX Research	3 Credit Hours
Companies are increasingly using ethnographic methods as a cutting-edge way to collect information about user experience. This course introduces students to ethnographic methods as applied to business and industry. Students will develop tools necessary to collect, analyze, and interpret user data in a way that empowers companies to deliver better products and experiences to their target audiences.		
Pre-requisites:		ENG 301 or ENG 302

ENG 402	Advanced Seminar in Communication	3 Credit Hours
This seminar will be a rotating list of topics, but will place a strong emphasis on oral communication, including presentations, meetings, and interviews. In an EdWeek article, "good oral communication skills got the #1 slot among the 15 job skills that executives and hiring managers identified as very important in new hires." Public speaking is an essential element of success in most jobs; yet it is often people's greatest fear. This course focuses on reducing fear by helping students learn, step by step, how to prepare and deliver engaging and persuasive presentations in both small and large group settings. Students also learn how to integrate audiovisual components effectively for maximum audience impact. The course's primary focus will be the preparation and delivery of presentations.		
Pre-requisites:		ENG 301 or ENG 302



كلية العلوم والدراسات العامة
College of Science & General Studies



Minor in Strategic Communication

Minor in Strategic Communication

This new minor, offered by the English Department is available to all undergraduate students at Alfaisal University and is designed to give students a competitive edge in the job market by developing in-demand communication skills. After completing the first-year composition sequence of English 101 and English 112 (with no grade below a B in either of the two courses) and after completing a minimum of 25 credit hours, students are eligible to apply for the minor if they have a minimum CGPA of 3.0. To receive the minor, students must maintain a CGPA of 3.0 until graduation. Students must complete 5 courses for a total of 15 credit hours, with no grade below a C. The five courses may include any of the courses listed below, in addition to ENG 222 (Technical Writing), MGT 201 (Business Communication), or ENG 224 (English for Medical Students).

Program Vision

The minor in Strategic Communication (SC) helps fulfill the English Department's vision to give students the communicative competence they need to help build a thriving, inclusive, and vibrant society. Communication skills consistently appear at the top of skills employers want to see in job candidates. The ability to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes to many different audiences is essential to success--as well as advancement--in any career. The courses in this minor help ensure that students are prepared to communicate for influence.



Poetry Corner

Collection of Poems by Alfaisal Students and Faculty

Not All Worms, But Always One

By Rushdan Firdous, Year 4 CoM

Brunette, eyes wide, with a sunny smile;
The seed of everything good to come.
Blonde, sharp jaw, his skin aglow,
To his words of butter, she will succumb.

He'd lay his life with no two thoughts,
Give up his coat in a winter storm.
But get closer, give him a chance,
He'd drop his mask– turn his form.

An apple orchard is not too far.
She plucks a bunch, and she takes a bite.
Past a few mouthfuls of moldy mush,
To all, she can lose her appetite.

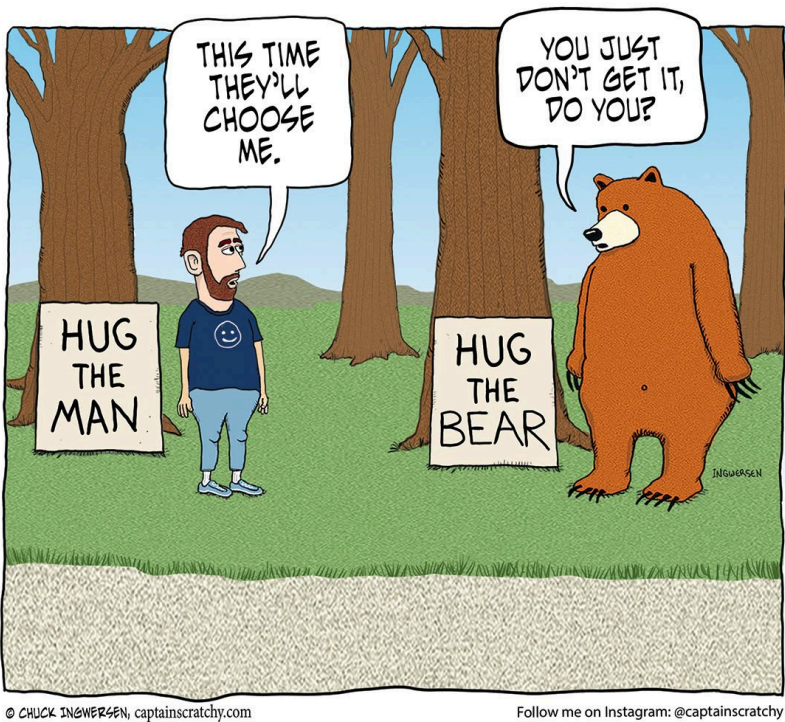
A clean polish with a sheen of red.
Give it a chance and see it decay
A worm, innocuous, exits its skin.
“Trust me, I’m a good worm.”, he says.

But trust doesn’t come easy to her.
For the three worms who bit her before
Made them known using the same motto.
“No offense, I’ll skip your bait”, she swore.

A taste of their twisted medicine,
A stab at their own machismo pride;
The worm sheds– a serpent in his wake
Grew with fangs exposed, abyss-eyed.

An echo of her harrowing past,
In fear’s grip, she stood scared,
Grieving the query all women face:
The Dilemma of Worm vs Bear

To be killed from venomous spite
Or be prey to a defense reflex?
Her choice has always been primitive.
Not all, but always one. Her unsafe hex.



Le soleil sous les armes, (extrait) de Jean Sénac

Extract selected by Sarah Ouassini, Year 1 CoB

« Je cherche un homme.
Non pas l’homme fusil,
Non pas l’homme frontière,
Non pas l’homme soldat,
Mais l’homme ouvert,
L’homme qui donne,
L’homme qui aime.
Un homme, debout,
Qui marche droit,
Qui marche clair,
Avec, dans les yeux,
Un horizon sans haine,
Avec, dans les mains,
Des gestes d’accueil,
Avec, dans le cœur,
Le soleil sous les armes. »

Extrait de "Le Soleil sous les armes" (1957), poème de Jean Sénac, écrivain pied-noir et fervent défenseur d’une Algérie fraternelle. Par ces vers, Sénac exprime son refus de la violence et son espoir d’un homme nouveau, libre, ouvert et pacifique, au-delà des frontières et des conflits.

Citoyen de beauté (extrait), de Jean Sénac

Extract selected by Sarah Ouassini, Year 1 CoB

« Nous voulons vivre debout,
face au soleil,
le cœur libre,
les mains ouvertes,
la parole claire.
Nous refusons les murs,
nous refusons la peur,
nous refusons la haine.
Notre patrie est celle des hommes debout,
celle des hommes qui marchent vers l’autre,
non pour le dominer,
mais pour lui tendre la main.
Nous ne voulons plus de l’homme fermé,
de l’homme cloison,
de l’homme barbelé.
Nous sommes citoyens d’un seul royaume :
celui de la beauté partagée.
Là où la parole éclaire,
là où le geste rassemble,
là où la vie se bâtit
sur la fraternité des cœurs. »

Jean Sénac (1926-1973), poète franco-algérien, revendique dans Citoyen de beauté un humanisme solaire et fraternel, loin des divisions coloniales et des murs dressés par la peur. Dans ses poèmes, la beauté devient une arme pacifique, un acte de résistance contre la haine et l’exclusion.



Artist Spotlight: Abdullah Alwakil

Sent by Mr. Abdullah Alwakil to the Alfa Press Team

“This is Abdullah, a multidisciplinary artist based in Riyadh.

Well, it's very frustrating to not be able to showcase your work in public.

In my experience, this is due to not having very supportive communities, but again, a man’s distress is the same man’s treasure, is how I see it.

I must say that I feed on melancholy; I consume it to produce art, to represent feelings of an unsettled mind, and to tell a story. It is quite a loop, I must say.

My hands and eyes translate all that into something to think about: a photo, a sketch, a song.

Thanks for highlighting my art. I'm more than excited to have it be seen and hoping this might get me to present it on a wall somewhere.

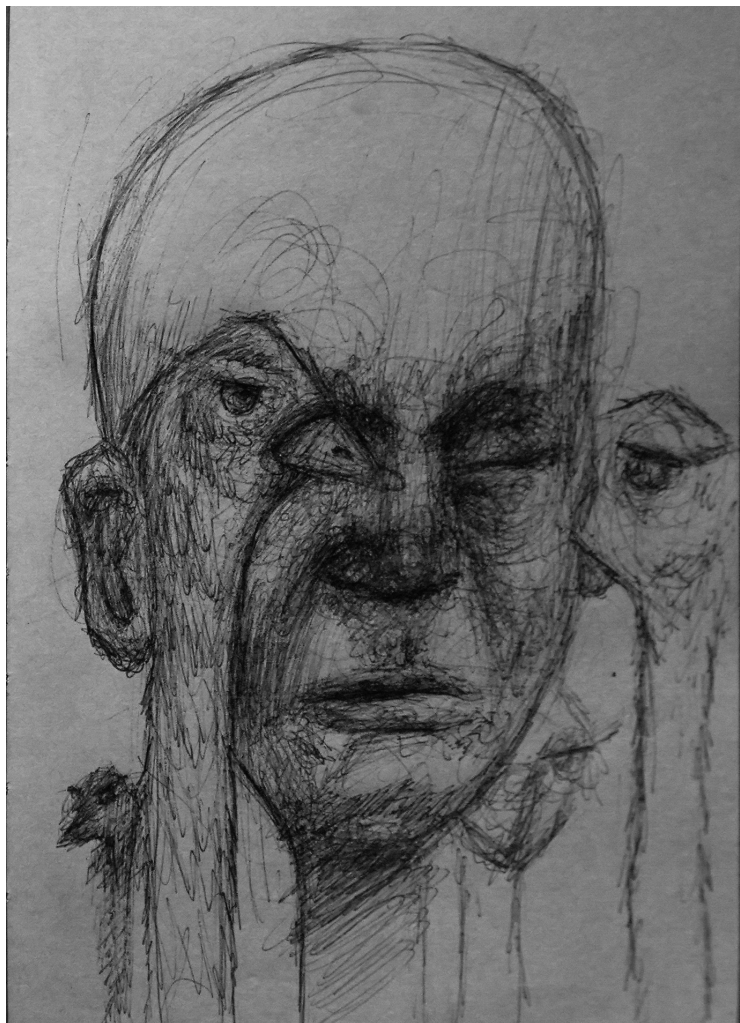
Thank you.

I’m eternally grateful.”

- Abdullah Alwakil

All works on this page are attributed to Abdullah Alwakil; they include:

- Photographs taken in AlKhobar, Saudi Arabia
- Paper-based sketches
- One digital drawing





The “Poetry Rocks” Competition

Written by Hala Rassass, Year 1 CoB

Poetry is a powerful form of expression, offering countless opportunities for individuals to share their thoughts, emotions, and stories. Recognizing this, the English Department at Alfaisal University has embraced the beauty of poetry by creating a platform for those who need it most, high school students. Over 15 high schools throughout Riyadh were represented in the competition.

The “Riyadh Rocks! Poetry Competition” was held for high school students, giving them a chance to express themselves through various poetic styles. Participants were able to choose from the following categories:

- Category 1: Haiku
- Category 2: Acrostic
- Category 3: Sonnet
- Category 4: Free Verse
- Category 5: AI-Generated Poetry

Students were encouraged to write about whatever they felt passionate about. The results were incredible, as we had just under 100 poem submissions covering a wide range of heartfelt topics including eating disorders, mental health, love, yearning, and much more.

The judges had a tough time selecting winners due to the high quality of submissions. Every poem told a unique story, and the emotional depth was truly appreciated by all who read them.

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to participate in the competition. We hope to see all of you continue to grow and succeed. And a special thank you to Dr. Laura for organizing such a beautiful event and giving students this amazing opportunity to shine.



Winners of the Poetry Rocks! Competition

كيف تحررنا اللغة؟

إعداد: د. غيداء بنت حامد الغامدي

هل فكرت يوماً أن لغتك قادرة على رسم عالمك؟ حدوده، ومداه؟ طرأ لي هذا السؤال عندما قرأت مقولة الفيلسوف "لودفيغ فيتغنشتاين": "حدود لغتي تعني حدود عالمي" فمن خلال اللغة يمكنك أن تعيش حراً، موسّعاً آفاق أفكارك، أو أن تكون محدوداً في نطاق ضيق، معتمداً على حصيلتك اللغوية "فاللغة هي بيت الوجود" كما يقول الفيلسوف هايدغر، ويمكنك من خلالها أن تختار مستقرّك، مكان ثابت راسخ أساسه مفردات وافرة، توسّع مدارك التفكير، أو مكان هش هامشي لا تسعفه الكلمات.

واللغة على مر العصور كانت المحرر والخلاص من كل ما يقيد الإنسان، بدءاً من العقاب أو القتل، انتهاءً بالفكرة والشعور. وهي العناد والمعول في مواجهة الجهل وسجنه، فكلما كانت اللغة غنية بالمفردات زاد التفكير عمقاً، وغدا فهم الوجود أكثر حكمة، والتعبير عن الشعور أدق. والعودة إلى التاريخ تظهر قصصاً عدة لدعم هذه الفكرة، فالكلمة كانت كفيلة بتحرير الشعراء من غضب الملوك، كما في قصيدة: "فإنك شمس الملوك كواكب إذا طلعت لم يبد منها كوكب" التي أنقذت النابغة الذبياني من غضب النعمان، وكانت السبب في خلاصه من العقاب، أو كلمات الأعرابي السلسة التي تصدّت لوعورة طبع الحجاج وصرامته، عندما قال له: "لاقتلتك شر قتلة" فرد عليه الأعرابي: "إذن أحسنها، فإن شر القتلات ما كان دون الحق" فتمكنت الكلمات رغم بساطتها من مجابهة موقف صعب.

ولا تغيب عنا قصة الحطيئة مع عمر بن الخطاب عندما استجدها بكلمات كانت السبب في خروجه من السجن. وليس التحرر هنا تحرراً مادياً من قتل وعقوبة فقط، بل كانت اللغة ومازالت تحرر الناس من سجن شعورهم، ومن ذلك الشاعر ابن الرومي الذي لا يجابهه في تطيره وتشاؤمه أحد، حتى بات يصمّة في شعره، إلا أن هذا التطير سقط أمام اللغة، فكانت الكلمات دواءً له من داء عصب أكل من شعره وشرب سنوات عدة، فأطلق سراح نفسه من هذا الشعور عندما سمع أبياتاً من ضمنها: "رجعت على نفسي فوطنتها على ركوب جميل الصبر عند النوائب" فظل مردداً لها حتى نسبت له، وحلف ألا يتطير أبداً. وفي عصرنا مواقف عدة تؤكد أن الكلمة غدت مشعل أمل أمام ظلمة اليأس، فكم من شخص تعني بـ "إذا الشعب يوماً أراد الحياة فلا بد أن يستجيب القدر" حتى تحررت شعوب بأكملها من يد الظلم والاستبداد. وبعيداً عن الشعر، فالكتابة بشكل عام تحرر الإنسان من شعوره، فينسكب ما يثقله مع الكلمات، وتجعله في مواجهة مع نفسه، فالكاتب الروسي ليو تولستوي اتخذ من الكتابة ملاذاً لمواجهة أزماته النفسية، وكتب في مذكراته عن قلقه الوجودي، مما ساعده على إيجاد معنى لحياته. وفي السياق نفسه يقول الكاتب همنغواي: "الكتابة تعلمك أن ترى العالم بعيون أكثر وضوحاً" فهل يمكن للإنسان أن يعيش بحرية دون لغة تعبر عن أفكاره ومشاعره؟ إن الإجابة تكمن في الكلمة نفسها؛ فالكلمات ليست مجرد أداة للتواصل، بل هي بوابة لعمق النفس، بُني جسوراً للذات لتفهم، وتعبّر، وتتحرّر.



التسويق

إعداد: الطالبة سناء محمد منطري، رابع سنة كلية الطب

فالثياب تزول، والمظاهر تتغير، أما العلم والأدب فهما زينة لا تبلى، وجمال لا يزول.
"ليس الجمال بأثواب تزينا، إن الجمال جمال العلم والأدب..."

كأنما خط هذا البيت ليكون عنواناً للحقيقة الخالدة التي ذكرها الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم في حديثه الكريم : "إن الله لا ينظر إلى صوركم ولا إلى أموالكم، ولكن ينظر إلى قلوبكم وأعمالكم"

أما غلا العنزي فبيّنت أنّها تحدثت عن ضرورة الاعتزاز باللغة العربية وتسليط الضوء على أهمية غرس حبها في نفوس الأطفال.

وتضيف العنزي: ما أوصلني إلى ما أنا عليه هو حرص والدتي على تعزيز حبها في قلبي منذ الصغر، وهذا ما دفعني لتحقيق إنجازات دولية وعالمية في مجال اللغة. فقد حصلت على المركز الأول على مستوى العالم العربي في مسابقة التحدث بالفصحى والخطابة والإلقاء الشعري وتعميق دراسة النحو من جامعة الدول العربية.

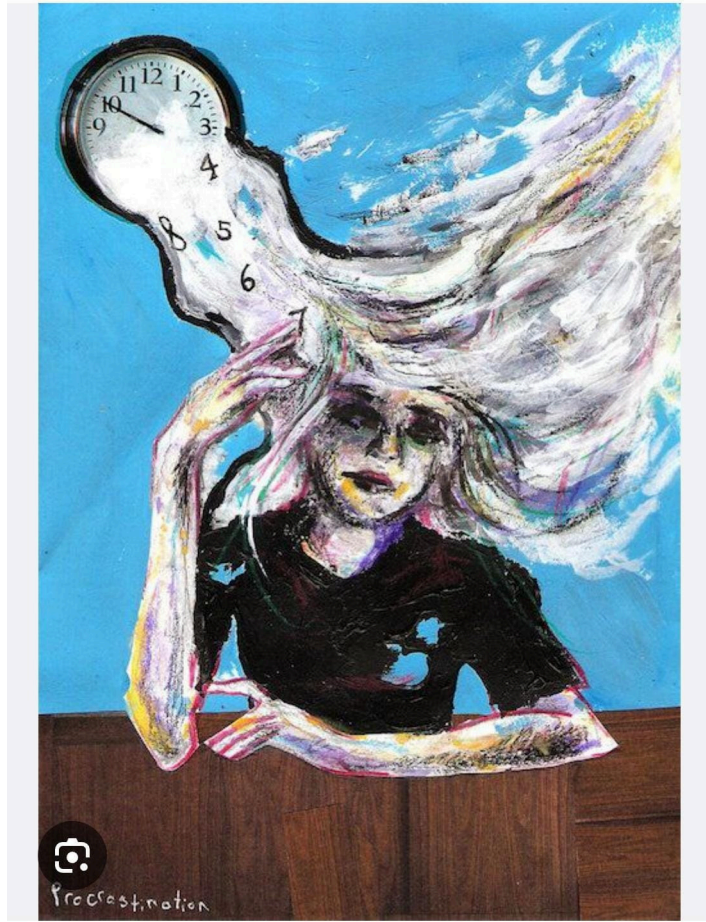
وصنفت من ضمن الخمسة الأوائل على مستوى العالم من بين أكثر من ٢٠ مليون طالب حول العالم بتحدي القراءة العربي بتكريم من الشيخ محمد بن راشد آل مكتوم حاكم دبي والميدالية الذهبية في مسابقة مناظرات وأولمبياد اللغة العربية على مستوى دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي بتنظيم من مكتب التربية العربي.

وختاماً، فخورون بهذه النخبة من المتسابقات، وسعيدون أن يكون بين طلاب الفيصل هذا العدد من عاشقي العربية، والتميزين فيها. لقد قدّمت جامعة الفيصل احتفالية استثنائية بلغتنا الأم، تمثّلت باستضافة مؤسس الاحتفال باليوم العالمي للغة العربية، وكذلك تكريم الفائزين بمسابقة سادة الإلقاء، التي بيّن المشرف على النادي أنّها ستكون مسابقة سنوية.



الطالبة الفائزة جميلة بشري مع معالي الدكتور محمد الهيازع رئيس جامعة الفيصل و أ.د. عمر السيف، بروفيسور اللغة العربية

وسيحظى الفائزون بتسلّم جوائزهم النقديّة ودروعهم من معالي رئيس الجامعة الأستاذ الدكتور محمد الهيازع. وقد حضر الحفل والمسابقة الدكتور خالد قطّان، والدكتورة هند السديري، إضافة إلى أعضاء لجنة التحكيم، ومجموعة من أعضاء هيئة التدريس، وحضور غفير من الطلاب الذين ملؤوا مدرّج الجامعة.



(Pinterest)

أعلم أن مستقبلي بيدي. فحاسبي المحمول أمامي مفتوح، فلما لا أستطيع الدراسة؟ حاجزٌ غير مرئي يمنعني من الوصول إلى المعلومات. أقرأ الكلمات، أكثر من مرة، ولكن هل فهمت شيئاً؟ لا. يا إلهي ماذا أفعل بنفسي؟ أين أنا؟ أنا هنا جسدياً، ولكنني ضائعة عقلياً في مكان آخر. في مكانٍ لا وجود له.

لماذا لا أستطيع الدراسة؟ أين ذهب الشغف؟ فأنا أعلم أن كلمة "ممل" ليست عذراً مقبولا ابداً. لماذا أفعل بنفسي هذا؟ هل أنتقم من نفسي؟ انني أعذب نفسي بنفسي بلطف، بنعومة، بعدم اصدار اية حركة، بالسكوت.

لماذا لست خائفة من الفشل والرسوب؟ هل أصبحت انسانا بلا مشاعر؟ هل أصبحت لا أبا لي؟ لست هكذا في العادة، ولكن إقناع العقل صعب بعض الأحيان. ألقيت اللوم على أجواء الغرفة، قلت بتحسينها سيتحسن مزاج عقلي، وسأفعله أن يدرس. فرتبت الغرفة، وكسست الأرض، ووضعت الكتب والملابس في أماكنها. لكنها لم تنفع. ثم أخذت حماماً دافئاً لعله يهدئ عقلي ويرجعها إلى الصواب، آملت أن الماء الذي سيجري عبر شعري سيغسل هموم العقل أيضاً. لم تنجح أيضاً.

مسحت جميع تطبيقات التواصل الاجتماعي وأغلقت الهاتف، لكن شغف الدراسة لم تعود. عرفت بعدها أن المشكلة لم تكن في الغرفة، أو المعلومات، أو الهاتف، أو حتى الشغف. بل الأمر يتعلق بالمسؤولية وقوة الإرادة في النفس للوصول إلى الهدف. فلنسنا بحاجة إلى أن نحب كل ما نقوم به، بل كل ما علينا فعله هو فهم المسؤولية والواجبات. فضبطت المنبه، وقلت بسم الله وأجبرت نفسي على البدء



اليوم العالمي للغة العربية ٢٠٢٥ - جامعة الفصل تحقيقي و تكتشف مواهب أبنائها في الإلقاء بالعربية!

إعداد: الطالب سمير عودة، ثاني سنة كلية الطب

أقام نادي للغة والثقافة العربية احتفاله باليوم العالمي للغة العربية، وقد تمثّل الاحتفال بمناسبتين مهمّتين. حيث استضاف النادي في الثامن عشر من شهر ديسمبر ٢٠٢٤ الدكتور زياد الدريس، المندوب الدائم السابق للمملكة العربية السعودية في اليونسكو بين عامي ٢٠٠٦-٢٠١٦، ومؤسس احتفالية اليوم العالمي للغة العربية.

وقد قدّم الدكتور الدريس محاضرة عنوانها: "كيف تأسّس اليوم العالمي للغة العربية؟"، ناقش فيها الكثير من القضايا الدائرة في الأوساط الثقافية عن المنظمات الدولية، والتحديات التي واجهت تحديد يوم عالمي للغة العربية. وبيّن في حديثه أنّ اهتمامنا بالعربية بها لا ينبغي أن يكون بكثرة مديحها، وإنّما بكثرة استخدامها.

وفي اليوم التالي (١٩ ديسمبر)، كان طلاب الفصيل على موعد مع المتأهلين إلى المرحلة الختامية لمسابقة "سادة الإلقاء" التي كان نادي نون قد طرحها، حيث كانت المنافسة شرسة بين المتأهلين. وواجهت لجنة التحكيم، التي تكونت من الدكتور عمر بن عبدالعزيز السيف وعضوية الدكتور خالد بسندي والدكتورة غيداء الغامدي، صعوبة في عملية التقييم كما ذكروا، بسبب تقارب المستويات.

وبين الحماس الكهربائي والاستماع الحميم، أبرز المتسابقون فنهم وقدراتهم، حيث عدداً من الخطابات المختلفة في موضوعات مهمة. وعلى الرغم من أنّ المسابقة تستهدف ثلاثة فائزين، غير أنّ أربعة من المتسابقات استطعن الحصول على المراكز الأولى على النحو الآتي:

- ١ - الفائز بالمركز الأول الطالبة: ملاذ محمد قاسم التّن
- ٢ - الفائز بالمركز الأول (مكرّر) الطالبة: غلا العنزي
- ٣ - الفائز بالمركز الثالث الطالبة: جمالية بشري
- ٤ - الفائز بالمركز الثالث (مكرّر) الطالبة فرح السرحان

وقد سعينا إلى مقابلة الطالبتين اللتين تقاسمتا المركز الأول، وطرح بعض الأسئلة، أولها: ما مزايا الإلقاء بالعربية، وما الفرق بينه وبين الإلقاء باللغات الأخرى مثل الإنجليزية؟

تقول الطالبة ملاذ التّن الإلقاء باللغة العربية تمثيل حقيقي للبيان.. اللغة العربية تعطي قوة للكلمة، ووضوحاً للمقصد، وجمالية للمعنى. لا أرى أن لغة أخرى تضاهيها بالجمال! عندما ألقى بالعربية أشعر أن الكلمات تخرج من القلب قبل اللسان، وكأنها مزيج من إحساس وفكرٍ يُطرح على السامعين.

الإنجليزية عملية، سريعة، تحمل المعنى... نعم، لكنها لا تحمل الروح. في العربية، كل حرف له نغمة، وكل كلمة لها ظل، وكل جملة لها هبة!

الإلقاء بها ليس مجرد نقل للمعلومة، بل هو عزفٌ على أوتار الذهن والمشاعر. العربية تمنحك القدرة على التأثير، لا فقط التوصيل. هي لغة إذا نطقها بصدق، سيطرت على العقول وسكنت القلوب، ليست المسألة مجرد لغة، بل روح تتجلى على اللسان.

أما الطالبة غلا العنزي فتؤكد أنّ العربية بحر واسع بمعانيه ودرره وألفاظه، كل فن بهذه اللغة ساحر. وللخطابة سحر خاص، ليس فقط بالألفاظ والمفردات بل بالروح التي تسكن الكلمات،



الطالبة الفائزة ملاذ محمد قاسم التّن أ.د. عمر السيف، بروفييسور اللغة العربية



الدكتور زياد الدريس

فللغة العربية قوة وجلال لا تتواجد بأي لغة من اللغات فهي تأسر السامع وتطرب الخاطر، بها بهاء وبيائها صفاء وهذا شيء تنفرد به اللغة العربية عن سائر اللغات.

ثم توجّهنا للمسابقات بسؤال آخر، وهو كيف جهزت نفسك للمشاركة بالمسابقة؟

تقول غلا العنزي هيأت نفسي لأكون صوتاً يحمل رسالة تدرت على الإلقاء الجيد بعد ما أعددت نصّاً يحمل في طياته تجربتي الخاصة برحلي في بحر اللغة العربية وتعلقي بالحروف الأبجدية منذ نعومة أظفاري.

أما ملاذ التّن فتقول: منذ طفولتي، كان للإلقاء مكانة خاصة في قلبي.. كنت أجد في الكلمة الموزونة متعة ورسالة، وفي الوقوف أمام الآخرين شعوراً بالثقة، وأني للمسرح أتمني.. كبرتُ والإلقاء يكبر معي، أصبح جزءاً من شخصيتي، ومجالاً أجد فيه نفسي، و وسيلة أعبر بها عما بداخلي. وحين جاءت فرصة المشاركة في هذه المسابقة، لم تكن البداية، بل مجرد امتداد لشغفٍ قديم، لذلك لم يكن الاستعداد للمسابقة صعباً، فأنا دائماً مستعدة لألقي نصّاً، ولاسيّما إن كان يعبر عني وعن شخصيتي. فالإلقاء جزء من عهد قطعته على نفسي أن أكون صوتاً صادقاً ينقل الفكرة، ويحيي اللغة، ويترك أثراً طيباً في النفوس.

وكان السؤال الأخير الذي وجهناه للمسابقات عن الرسالة التي وجهتها للمسابقات بخطابتهنّ على المسرح.

وقد بيّنت ملاذ التّن أنّها دعت للتأمل في جوهر الإنسان، لا في ظاهره. فكم من مظهر أنيق خال من المعنى، وكم من قلب بسيط يفيض بالحكمة والنور! فالجمال الحقيقي لا يُقاس بما نرتديه، بل بما نحمله من علم نافع، وأدب رفيع، وخلق كريم.



VOICES OF THE SAND-- Alfaisal's Very Own Literary Journal

Written by Sarah Tullah, Year 3 CoM

Voices of the Sand is Alfaisal University's very first literary art journal. Established in 2024 as a student-led venture under the supervision of the English Department, Voices of the Sand has successfully established a platform for the unheard artists of Alfaisal with its inaugural issue released this April.

The voices of the sand forge a looking-glass confronting the artist's mind. Simple elements are used to craft artwork that not only holds meaning for the artist, but shares a lens with the audience to experience the creative process. In her analytical piece titled "Seeking Something Stronger Than Stone", Samra Mirza eloquently imparts this wisdom upon the reader: "Writing about something can bring meaning to it, and reading about something can give someone meaning."

One may say that the journal is a memoir looking upon the lives of the artwork it features. Truly an odd sentiment but it rings true to the artists that have authored the artwork. To them, these works speak stories that deserve to be heard. They donate a small part of themselves in the shape of prancing colours and conversing phrases as a portfolio of their existence.

Sara Al-Towireb's sketch, "Where Camels Fear to Tread", is an excellent example of an art-piece that not only evokes visual appeal, but also delivers a poignant message of the reality the artwork mirrors. The plight of the camels and the malice of human greed is visible in the black strokes that span the page.

All in all, the journal emphasises the necessity of a medium for budding artists to explore their creativity and expand their artistic repertoire. By establishing said medium, the English Department honours the practice of freedom of expression for these individuals, allowing them to bloom out of the stiff moulds they're often quarantined in when embarking on the journey of establishing a career. Voices of the Sand calls out to these creators to write, paint, and click away at the shutter, so that, as Dr Emily Wilson so succinctly puts it, "They may bring more light into this world."

Colouring: Paisley Design

By Sana Manzari, Year 4 CoM

Kashmiri carpets, 60s hippie shirts, and bandanas; what do they all have in common? *Boteh*, the almond-shaped motif with a round bottom and curvy, pointed tip leaf can be found in all designs. The paisley pattern (which is made of many boteh motifs) is one of the most beautiful 2,000-year-old ornamental textiles, which is still in fashion today.

Its origin goes back to Persia and is believed to be a Zoroastrian religious symbol, although there is no clear evidence of that. It was introduced to the Western world by the Islamic-Mughal empire of India in the form of luxurious Kashmiri shawls, woven from fine goat hair and designed with vibrant paisley patterns. These shawls were traded with Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries and soon spread.

The pattern of paisley got its name from the Scottish town of the same name that turned into a center for Boteh shawl production, inspired by the Kashmiri design in the 19th century. In the 60s, paisley also became a symbol of psychedelic art and hippie culture. Bands like the Beatles helped popularize it as they wore paisley-patterned shirts. In 2012, Boteh (the element of the paisley pattern) was displayed as the emblem of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, held in Azerbaijan.

So, grab any pencil and start coloring this beautiful paisley pattern and make your mind relax! If you couldn't find a pencil, then ask your younger siblings; they probably have some (tip: don't take one without their permission, as you will not get distressed in a fight!).

