

NOVEMBER 2020 | ISSUE 6

# GO2GRAD

TO ENHANCE, TO EMPOWER, TO ENRICH

# NEWSLETTER

## *MANAGING SEASONAL STRESS:*

YOUR WINTER SURVIVAL  
GUIDE

**10**

FOODS FOR  
BETTER  
BRAIN POWER

## **GOING THE DISTANCE**

NO-CONTACT IDEAS FOR  
KEEPING IN TOUCH



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# FOOD FOR THOUGHT: 10 Foods for Better Brain Power

By: Ahmad Galuta

Did you know that your brain uses up to 20% of your energy even while you're resting? Clearly, a lot of energy is needed for your brain to function, let alone at its best. That's why it's important, especially as a student, to fuel your brain with a proper diet in order to boost your learning capabilities and overall brain health. As Jim Kwik, world-renowned brain coach, puts it, "what you eat matters for your grey matter!". We've compiled a short-list of our favorite "brain foods" here that can help to supercharge your brain, so read on to find your new favorite study snack!

## 1. BLUEBERRIES (OR BRAINBERRIES!):

- These have high levels of antioxidants that protect the brain from wear and tear.
- Strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries are a great source of antioxidants too. These go well in smoothies, with yogurt, or in oatmeal.

## 2. WHOLE-GRAIN FOODS:

- These contain long-chain carbohydrates and fibers that translate into sustained energy and brain fuel to keep you going without crashing!
- They're great to have for breakfast - think oatmeal, whole-wheat toast, or whole-grain cereal.

## 3. NUTS (ESPECIALLY WALNUTS!):

- These are rich in fats, proteins, and antioxidants that can boost memory, concentration, and alertness, making them fantastic food for your brain.
- Crushed walnuts make for great toppings, but whole walnuts are great as a snack on their own too.

## 4. AVOCADO:

- The king of monounsaturated fats! This is important for synthesizing acetylcholine (a major brain signaling molecule), lowering inflammation and the risk of dementia.
- Check out all these cool recipes for more avocado inspiration!

### 5. SALMON OR FATTY FISH:

- These foods are rich in long-chain omega 3 fatty acids that are essential to help the cells in your brain communicate, grow, and allow for learning. Your brain is approximately 60% fat and most of that are long-chained omega 3 fatty acids!
- These foods have also been shown to balance your mood, reduce depression, and boost cognitive function.
- Note: Nuts & seeds have omega 3 fatty acids too, but are short-chained!

### 6. BROCCOLI OR LEAFY VEGETABLES:

- Green veggies are great brain foods that provide simple sugars, fiber, vitamins and other essential minerals. In particular, broccoli contains a lot of choline, which can help boost memory and focus.
- Try experimenting and having fun with different salads or steam your veggies!

### 7. DARK CHOCOLATE (70% AT LEAST):

- Everything in moderation, right? This treat is high in flavonols and helps to increase blood flow to your brain.
- Avoid eating dark chocolate at night, since it contains caffeine and can disrupt your sleep.

### 8. PUMPKIN SEEDS:

- For such a small food, these are a great source of omega 3 and 6. They also provide zinc, which promotes higher cognitive functioning of the brain, including rational thinking and decision-making.
- They're nice to have as a snack while you're studying... you can try substituting these for chips if you have a craving for something crunchy.





### 9. GREEN TEA, MATCHA, OR BOTH!:

- These drinks are a superb source of antioxidants that'll keep your brain in tip-top shape. They're also cognitive boosters that improve memory and attention because of their caffeine and L-theanine content.
- Try having a cup of matcha green tea while you're studying or before a test for maximum brainpower.

### 10. TURMERIC:

- This spice contains potent anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective properties that help keep your body and brain in a healthy state.
- Add a teaspoon to your next smoothie, soup, or meal!

As a student who is constantly learning and exercising your brain, taking proper care of it and sustaining it through healthy eating should be a priority. Eating the right foods will not only help you keep up with the high demands of school, but will also give you an edge in your cognitive abilities. It's especially important to maintain a balance in your diet to ensure that your brain is receiving enough sugar (complex carbs), fats (unsaturated), vitamins, and minerals consistently. The perks of a properly nourished brain will not only improve your performance in school but your overall mental health and well-being. Therefore, fuel your brain and ignite your life!

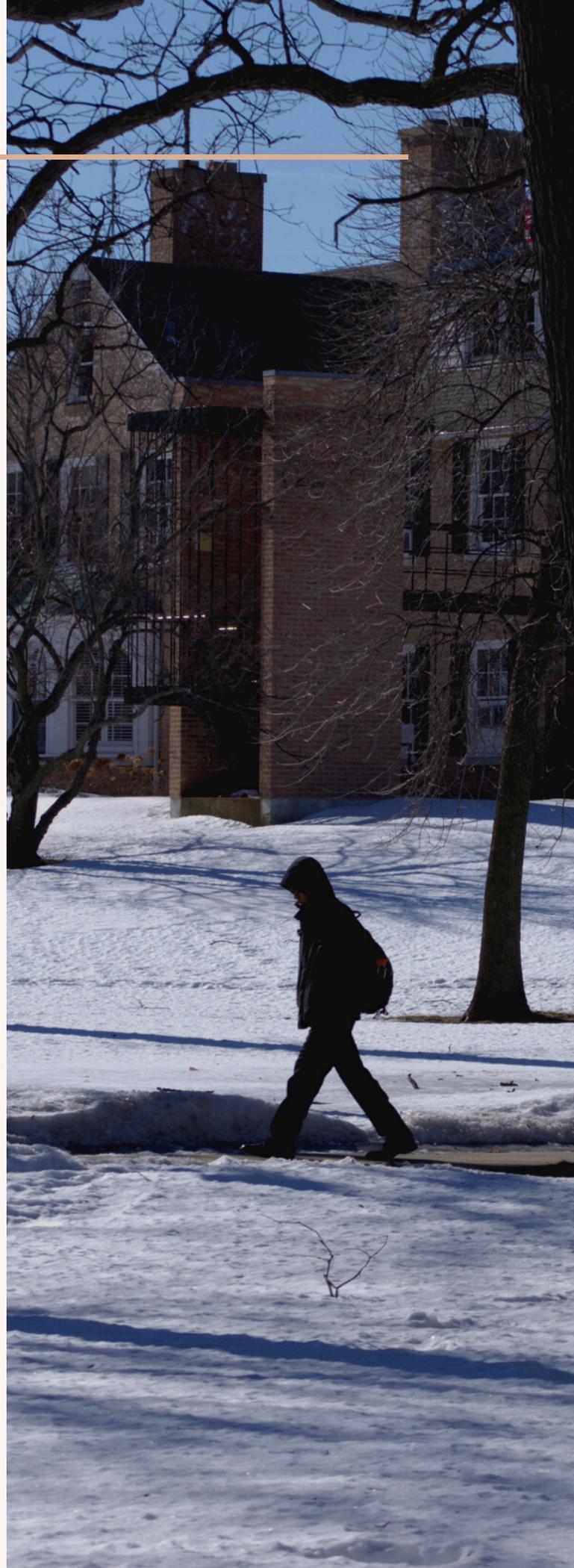
BY: KAY ASPINALL

# MANAGING SEASONAL STRESS: YOUR WINTER SURVIVAL GUIDE

As Canadians, we're used to tough winters. Cold, dark days filled with snow and ice can usually be expected from November through to March in most parts of the country, which can make maintaining a positive attitude difficult. It's also the time of year when many students face final exams and major assignments, and holidays can add an extra layer of stress for many people. Top it off with COVID-19 and physical distancing, and the upcoming winter can seem pretty bleak. However, despite the challenges that this season brings, there are also plenty of ways that you can maintain your wellness and well-being. Check out these tips for beating the winter blues!

## PLAN AHEAD

Whether it's completing a long essay, scheduling an appointment, or making your holiday gift list, don't put off the things that are stressing you out. Although ignoring these tasks might make you feel better in the moment, it can leave you feeling overwhelmed as your deadlines draw nearer. Make a plan or schedule now for how you'll handle major obligations and try to break them up into manageable amounts of work. You know yourself best, so try to schedule more challenging tasks at times of the day when you have the most energy and easier tasks for when you feel less motivated. This plan doesn't have to be perfect or exhaustive, but writing down what you have to do and when you'll do it can make your tasks a lot less stressful and leave you with more time to do the things you enjoy.



## **CREATE AN EMOTIONAL FIRST AID KIT**

Most of us know how to treat minor physical injuries like scrapes, bruises, or splinters using the supplies in a first aid kit, but what about performing first aid for emotional injuries? The concept of emotional first aid is crucial for maintaining good mental health and preventing issues like loneliness, failure, or overthinking from becoming more serious problems. Psychologist Guy Winch does a great TED Talk on this subject. Essentially, it's important to recognize signs of when you're feeling negative emotions and to have coping strategies planned for these occasions ahead of time. An emotional first aid kit can include anything that helps you when you're feeling distressed, from breathing exercises and positive affirmations to a list of coping mechanisms or contact information for close friends and family. I recommend including some sensory items that you find calming, such as a soft blanket to feel, a calming essential oil to smell, a piece of chocolate to taste, or a playlist of calming songs.

## **USE THE BUDDY SYSTEM**

Whether it's studying for an exam, working out, or finishing a project, it's easier to complete challenging tasks with someone else to keep you on track. If you find it difficult to motivate yourself, try asking a friend or family member to help keep you accountable and offer to return the favour. This can look like texting each other to share your progress on a daily or weekly basis, having a virtual study date or workout together, or whatever arrangement works best for you and your buddy. What's important is that you both motivate each other to do your best and check in regularly to make sure you're both on track. Two heads are better than one, teamwork makes the dream work... There's a reason that there are so many maxims about the effectiveness of working together!





## **PRACTICE GRATITUDE**

Although life can be pretty challenging, particularly during the winter months, it's important to remember that we all have reasons to be grateful. In addition to achievements, successes, and great experiences that stand out as positive moments, there are also much more ordinary (but no less significant) things that bring value to our lives. Family, friends, a safe place to live, nutritious food, and the ability to learn and go to school are all things that we can take for granted, but that substantially enrich our lives. One helpful way to practice gratitude is by journaling. Each night, try to make a habit of writing down three things for which you are grateful. These can change based on the day or repeat; the point is that you are shifting your focus from the negatives or the things that you lack in your life to a more positive perspective which will, in turn, improve your mood and overall well-being.

## **KNOW YOUR LIMITS**

It's great to be hardworking and set ambitious goals for yourself. In fact, we encourage it! However, there are times when you simply don't have the physical or emotional resources to do everything you want to all at once. Everyone's threshold is different, so it's important to know the signs of burnout that are unique to you. Some common signs can include: always feeling exhausted (no matter how much sleep you get), lacking motivation to attend class or start assignments, increased irritability or frustration with others, loss of confidence in your abilities, and increased pain and tension in your body, to name a few. If you're feeling this way, it may be time to adjust your expectations and slow down, whether that's requesting an extension for a project, saying no to added responsibilities in your personal life, or seeking professional help from a counselor. Remember, life is a marathon, not a sprint, and by taking time to prioritize your wellness and well-being you will have more physical and emotional resources available in the future to perform at your fullest potential.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF REACHING OUT

BY: ROZY ABO MAZID

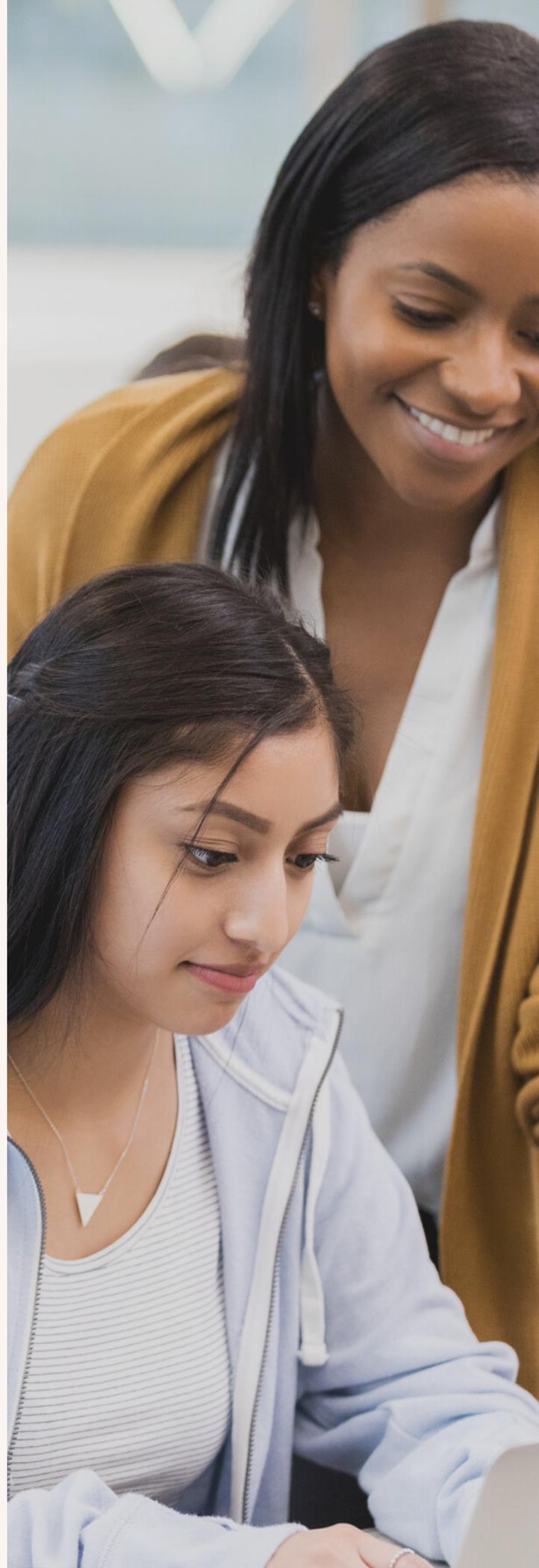
One of the key life lessons I've learned during my time in school is the importance of reaching out and asking for help. I started to struggle when I went from attending a public school with a very relaxed curriculum to attending a private school with an extensive workload and a very challenging curriculum. This transition was very difficult for me and I found myself lost most of the time in my STEM courses, which negatively affected my GPA.

I had a couple of teachers reach out to me and suggest that I join them for after-school tutoring sessions, but in my mind, I believed that asking for help would make people pity me, so I continued to struggle in silence. As a result, my grades continued to plummet and before I knew it, I was placed on academic probation. My parents were called in and informed that if I continued down this path, I would have to repeat grade 10.

I come from a long line of highly educated individuals, so you can imagine how shocked and concerned my parents were for me. My parents suggested hiring a tutor because they thought that I didn't like my teachers and that that was why I was refusing to attend after-school sessions. When I explained my point of view to them, they started to open up about their own academic struggles and how they got to where they are now. My dad emphasized that there is no shame in asking for help and that I should consider myself brave to state that I am struggling. My mom explained to me that the more you ask for help, the stronger you get and the greater your knowledge becomes on a topic. After listening to what they had to say and some more convincing from my teachers, I finally decided to get after-school help. It was there that I realized that I wasn't alone!

Because I was the new kid, I didn't have many friends at the time, and it was in these after-school sessions that I began to form some of my strongest friendships that I still cherish today. Listening to my classmates explain why they were struggling and how it was affecting their mental health allowed me to connect with them during these sessions. Before I knew it, the idea that I had created in my head about people pitying me for my lack of knowledge in these subjects slowly began to fade away. By the end of the year, my grades had improved so much that attending after-school help sessions was no longer necessary.

My advice for you is to get out of your head. If you are struggling academically and afraid to ask for help, just know that the only person standing in your way is you. No one is paying nearly as much attention to what you are doing as you think they are. Get out of your head and start to advocate for yourself by reaching out when needed and who knows, maybe finally accepting help could change your life in more ways than you know.





# HELP IS HERE: AN OVERVIEW OF STUDENT SUPPORTS ON CAMPUS

BY: KAY ASPINALL

Being a postsecondary student is an amazing experience: you're learning from experts, meeting tons of interesting people, and possibly exploring a new city. However, it can also be a very difficult time for many young people. Whether it's loneliness, being away from family, stress related to academic performance, or struggling to adapt to living on your own, there are plenty of aspects that can make college or university challenging. Luckily, many postsecondary institutions recognize this and provide a wide range of support services aimed at helping students. Since Go2Grad Tutors is based in Ottawa, this article will explore resources available at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, but many other institutions offer similar programs and services. While some services have been modified or cancelled due to COVID-19, most resources remain accessible online.

## WRITING HELP

If you have a paper that you can't seem to finish, or can't seem to start, these services are for you. Both [Carleton University](#) and the [University of Ottawa](#) have dedicated writing help services that pair students 1-on-1 with writing consultants who can offer support and advice. In addition to helping students with specific assignments, these services also offer general tips to improve academic writing, navigate style guides, and build students' skills so that they can be more confident about their writing in the future.

*It is during our darkest moments  
that we must focus to see the light.*

- Aristotle



## **COUNSELLING**

The last few years have seen a growing emphasis on students' mental health and well-being, and many universities have responded by offering counselling services, often at no or low cost. [Carleton University](#) and the [University of Ottawa](#) both offer a range of counselling services, including short-term individual counselling for students, same-day counselling sessions, group counselling, and counselling specifically for students in residence. There are also a variety of programs and online resources available through these services to help students build skills and coping mechanisms to improve their mental health at their own pace.

## **STUDENT MENTORS**

When you have a problem, it can often help to ask someone who's already had a similar experience. That's why many postsecondary institutions offer mentorship services where upper-year students offer guidance to their peers. These services can be accessed through your faculty, residence, or service centres (e.g. career development office, French Immersion program, regional outreach, etc.) and many resources can be accessed online. [Carleton University](#) and the [University of Ottawa](#) each have mentorship programs available to help students adjust to the challenges of university life.

## **HEALTH PROMOTION**

Health promotion teams on campus offer a wide range of services and information to students. From nutrition and physical activity to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco to sexual health and sleep, these teams can answer your questions and provide guidance. Both [Carleton University](#) and the [University of Ottawa](#) have health promotion teams that can guide you to community resources, give you health and wellness information, and offer free resources (e.g. menstrual hygiene products, protection for safer sex, rapid and anonymous HIV testing, etc.). These teams also run a variety of activities and workshops for students, many of which have moved online during COVID-19.

## **CAREER SERVICES**

Not sure what you want to do or how to get there? Your campus career services centre has you covered. With career counselling, résumé tips, job search assistance, and more, these services can help you to increase your confidence and achieve your goals. [Carleton University](#) and the [University of Ottawa](#) each have centres dedicated to career development that offer a variety of supports, networking events, and skill-building workshops, many of which are available virtually. These centres also usually have close relationships with top local employers, which can make it easier to transition to the workforce after graduation.



# GOING THE DISTANCE:

## N O - C O N T A C T I D E A S F O R K E E P I N G I N T O U C H

By: Kay Aspinall

In my time as a university student, I've repeatedly encountered a frustrating problem: my friends kept moving away. Whether it was my best friend spending a year abroad in Europe, other friends who transferred to schools elsewhere in the country, or the friend on an exchange who had to leave Canada only a few months after he arrived here, I can never seem to keep my social network in one place. Although this has been challenging at times, it has also been a great opportunity to learn about my friends' experiences in different parts of the world. Perhaps most importantly, it made me a master of long-distance friendships even before COVID-19 required strict physical distancing. We are lucky to have so much amazing technology available to help us communicate with our loved ones, regardless of location. Video calling, social media, and messaging services can all connect us with others in an instant. However, if you're like me, you probably miss enjoying shared experiences

and activities with your friends, and while talking is great, sometimes what you really want is to actually do something together. Here are some of my favourite fun ways to engage with friends from a distance.

### GAME ON!

I love board games. From family-friendly classics like Scrabble or Settlers of Catan to raunchier party staples like Cards Against Humanity or Personally Incorrect, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Fortunately, there are tons of online options that you can use to host your very own virtual game night. One of the most popular options among my friends is [Jackbox Games](#), which sells 'party packs' with a variety of games included (trivia, drawing, writing... you name it!). Another hit has been [All Bad Cards](#), an online game similar to Cards Against Humanity. Both services offer family-friendly versions so that you can avoid awkwardness at Christmas dinner, as well as less censored versions that you can enjoy with friends.

## HAVE YOU SEEN...

While everyone loves a good solo binge watch, sometimes it's nice to enjoy a movie or TV show with company. Free services like [WatchParty](#) or [Scener](#) make it easy to share everything but the popcorn with your loved ones, no matter where they are. Both of these options sync videos between users so that you don't have to find your spot again if someone takes a bathroom break, plus there are options to chat and share webcam footage so that you can watch your friends' and family's reactions in real time. The next time a friend or family member recommends a TV show or movie, suggest watching it together!



## FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE LIVING ROOM

You're probably familiar with PowerPoint (or Google Slides, Keynote for Apple, etc.) in the context of lectures or class presentations, but have you ever heard of PowerPoint parties? This trend, which started on TikTok earlier this year, involves you and a group of others each creating a short presentation on a topic of your choice. It can be anything from your favourite conspiracy theory to the TV show you're obsessed with hot takes on celebrities to ranking your friends' hometowns (careful with this one!)... all that matters is that you choose something fun. At your virtual gathering, each group member takes a turn sharing their creation. In addition to being fun, you may actually learn something new and it's a great way to practice your presentation skills.

## SNAIL MAIL

There's something satisfying about receiving actual physical mail. Whether it's an online order, an invitation, or really anything other than a bill, it's usually an exciting surprise to see a letter or parcel in your mailbox. My favourite mail is always the letters or postcards that I receive from friends and family; it shows that they're thinking about me and care enough to send something personal. It's also kind of quaint and old-timey in our present age of instant communication. If you're looking for a way to keep in touch with loved ones beyond the occasional phone call or exchanging memes, ask for their addresses and send them a message the old-fashioned way.



**A SPECIAL THANKS  
TO OUR AMAZING  
WRITERS**

Ahmad Galuta

Rozy Abo Mazid

Kay Aspinall

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