



2023 Pack a Punch Contest Entries

*Some light formatting changes have been made to create consistency through the PDF.
Where students included their last name when signing off as editor of their magazine, we changed the last name to an initial to protect their privacy.*

Ollie J., 11, Saudi Arabia

Dear Ollie,

Currently, my friends have been all over “Bloxburg” and I was wondering if it is worth it. Bloxburg sounds fun and interesting, but I am not sure if it’s the best game for me. In Roblox, I love to role play and go on adventures. My favorite games are Adopt me, Brook Haven, and Blox fruits. I heard that you can build your own house in Bloxburg, It sounds very fun and I’m wondering if I should start off ambitious and build a massive house or just make a small budget home.

Sincerely, from a Roblox loving 9-year-old Layla

Hello faithful reader,

I have read your letter and have thoroughly considered your dilemma of whether or not to purchase Bloxburg. This Roblox game, although cheap, is not worth it because the map is lacking things like a school, and the map feels very small and incomplete. Another big flaw is that the role play is hard to do in this game because the town is small, and you can drive through it in seconds. But there are other Roblox games I think a role player like you would enjoy including, Berry Avenue, Brookhaven, Livetopia and Backpacking.

I hope this advice is helpful. From Ollie

Aidan D., 13, Idaho - FINALIST

Dear Sir,

I LOVE your magazine so much that I have memorized the first one. Every time I drive to the store, I Buckle it up in my passenger seat. Plus, when I go to bed, I tuck it in a mini-bed I bought just for it. My favorite part of your magazine is the *redstone tricks no one knows*. I do have a couple of questions about your redstone tricks.

You say it's better to use the redstone square with the repeaters rather than the sticky piston and redstone loop even though it needs to be reset every once in a while. Why? Also, I started building a redstone base, but it's going haywire just like you said might happen. All the redstone is connected, so it could be anywhere. I can't shut it down and I checked everything. Could you tell me what might be wrong? Thanks for your magazine! If you write a letter back, I might frame it and put it on my wall. My alarm to hug my magazine just went off. Thank you so much!

Yours,
Ris Read

Dear Ris Read,

Thank you for reading my magazines. A lot of people just read the magazine but don't actually use what they read in all of their worlds, but I am glad that you try to incorporate it into your Minecraft worlds.

Your first question has a simple answer. I didn't recommend the sticky piston with the redstone block because after you hook it up, your power might flicker sometimes. It also can cause your world to be slower and is loud. As long as it is reset, the repeater circle will always maintain the same time until its power reaches all the way around. Since I can't see your base from your second question, I cannot be sure, but I do think I might know some possibilities. If you put that redstone repeater loop I was just writing about somewhere in your base, it might need to be restarted. You might have accidentally placed redstone in the wrong spot or you placed two repeaters facing opposite directions together and hooked them up to the same redstone line, causing a never-ending power supply. All you need to do to stop it is to break one of the repeaters.

I appreciate your letter and your lovingness for my magazines, even though it's a little weird to tuck it in for bed. In my next magazine, I will put in a *Redstone Troubleshooting* section in there so there's no more confusion. If you ever need more help, you can always send another letter.

Sincerely,
Aidan

Miles G., 13, Minnesota - **FINALIST**

Dear Sir,

Every time I read your magazine, I can't help but point out the various errors I see. You never fact check, and your editors are terrible. The articles have very little structure, are uninteresting, and do not follow a logical progression. For example, one recent article mentioned the feeding habits of fish, then you switched to talking about what bears eat! How are those two topics related in any way? It was a confusing and jarring switch, and it damaged my enjoyment of the paper.

An article from a few years ago was about how elephants can communicate through the ground. I have no idea how that is even possible. Animals communicate verbally and that's it. Learn facts before you tell them to other people. Also, the presentation of the writing was bad, and the subject wasn't very interesting. I mean, who cares?

In this month's edition, you included an article about rabbits. You said at one point that they were rodents. That was completely, grossly, enrapturingly **WRONG!** Rodents are mammals that live in Antarctica. The family includes kangaroos, wombats, and the extinct Tasmanian tiger. Rabbits are in a family of mammals known as marsupials.

In short, I will most likely be unsubscribing. Your magazine is not high quantity and it is very boring. I have little respect for you and your crew, and I demand that you stop printing lies!

With loathing,
Alfred Gobstock.

Mr. Gobstock,

I apologize that you have not had a **wild** experience reading our magazine. I respect your concerns, but I would like to point out that our editors are very hardworking men and women, who are also trained professionals.

In our article that you mentioned, *Yellowstone National Park Food Chain*, we discussed what fish eat; we then proceeded to tell how grizzly bears eat those fish. We were simply moving up the food chain, a strategy that many high-quality documentaries and articles use.

Ah, the elephant article. That was a personal adventure of mine. I was camping in the plains of South Africa, and a herd of elephants came roaming past. I thought in that moment, watching those majestic mammals tread past my tent, of the amazing capabilities and adaptations of those

creatures. They can detect vibrations from other elephants through the ground. I'm sorry that you did not enjoy the article, because we do our best, but I would like to point out that plenty of people care.

Nothing I say here will convince you if you didn't believe the article, but you have rodents and marsupials switched. Marsupials live in Australia and include animals like kangaroos, wombats, quolls, and Tasmanian devils. They are defined by their pouches on their stomachs which they used to care for their young. Rodents are small mammals found all over the globe.

I would like to apologize once more that you do not enjoy our magazine. Our crew works hard to bring you the best, and we fact check very diligently.

Sincerely,
The Editor

Heidi G., 13, Oklahoma - FINALIST

Dear Editor,

Every year for Christmas my parents buy me a magazine subscription, and this year I asked specifically for a subscription to your magazine, which had been recommended to me by a friend. Once my subscription was confirmed, I couldn't wait till my first issue would arrive. I had heard it was amazing! It arrived on Monday, and I read it immediately. I absolutely loved it!

I have never been an avid reader, but your magazine has gotten me interested in the classics. When I finished your article about the benefits of reading classic literature, I decided to ask my mom if we owned any classic books. I was delighted when she told me that we owned an old copy of *Pride and Prejudice*. I'll admit that I was slightly worried when I picked up the old, dust-covered manuscript. I mean who wants to read a book with 432 pages? Well, I eventually made up my mind that I would read through at least the first chapter before stopping. Fortunately for me, I was hooked within the first 4 pages.

I found that *Pride and Prejudice* is a beautiful book, with a touching love story and a terrible scandal. I was so enthralled with *Pride and Prejudice* that I finished it in less than three days! Jane Austen wrote a fantastic book—to think that I never would have read it had it not been for your magazine. To me, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth's troubles would have been like chaff in the wind. I am indeed grateful for your magazine and cannot wait until next month's issue arrives in my mailbox containing more treasures for me to unlock.

I am currently reading *Little Women*, a book you recommended in this month's issue, and I think it is simply marvelous. Please continue to recommend amazing books and tell such wonderful stories. You have changed my reading habits for good, and I am sure you have changed other people's as well. Thank you again!

Sincerely, Amanda Lewis, age 12 Cleveland, OH

Dear Miss Lewis,

Thank you very much for your letter. We could not stop smiling after we read it. I am so glad that our magazine has made such an impact on one so young as yourself.

Upon hearing of your newfound enjoyment of literature, we wondered if you might enjoy a few good book recommendations. I have consulted with several of the staff members about which books would be appropriate, and, I may say, that we recalled quite a number of good books.

Here is a list of some of our favorites:

1. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. It's a story about an imaginative little girl who accidentally falls down a rabbit hole, changes her size, and continually bumps into a very strange White Rabbit. Throughout her adventures, Alice meets a mad queen who threatens to have her head cut off, the grinning Cheshire Cat who mysteriously appears and disappears, and the Mad Hatter and March Hare, who never seem to tire of having tea. Will Alice ever make it back to the real world?
2. *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. *The Secret Garden* is a charming little book that tells the tale of young Mary Lennox, a spoiled girl, who at the start of the story is living in India when her whole family is struck down by an infectious disease leaving 10-year-old Mary all alone. Mary is soon sent to live with her only relative, the mysterious Mr. Archibald Craven. While exploring the grounds of her Uncle's estate in England, Mary discovers an odd key that doesn't seem to unlock anything. Upon hearing of an abandoned garden from her new friend Dickon, Mary is determined to find it. Along the way, Mary finds that her Uncle Craven has a young son, her cousin Colin, who is, like Mary, incredibly spoiled. Together with Dickon, the two cousins discover a door in one of the garden walls. Could this be the one that leads to the forgotten garden?
3. *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. If you enjoy reading *The Secret Garden*, this is another book by Burnett that has charmed young readers for decades. *A Little Princess* is about a pampered little girl named Sara Crewe, whose widowed father leaves her in a luxurious boarding school while he goes off to fight in the Boer war. Time passes quickly for Sarah, who gets everything she wishes for because the director of the school, Miss Minchin, thinks there is no end to Mr. Crewe's money. This, thankfully, does not change Sarah's kind disposition as she shares all she has both with other students and a young servant girl named Becky. On the day of Sarah's eleventh birthday, however, everything changes. News is brought that Sarah's father has died of Jungle Fever, leaving Sarah quite penniless and alone. Miss Minchin decides this is a good opportunity to gain free labor and makes Sarah work for her as an unpaid maid. Although banished to the attic at nights with only Becky to talk to, Sarah continues to remain kind and cheerful, much to the distaste of Miss Minchin. With such a cruel woman in charge of her fate, Sarah must indeed have the courage of a princess to help meet the challenges she faces next.

We hope that these recommendations will help you further your love of the classics. And as always, we encourage you to check with your local librarian or classroom teacher for more recommendations. Keep reading and soaking up knowledge!

Sincerely,

Heidi G.
Editor

Elise C., 13, Ontario

Dear Editor,

I am Sergei Zhestokiy. Sergei has come to complain about magazine. When Sergei was alive four winters, Sergei was taught how to hunt Borzoi, and at five Sergei caught first Caucasian Ovcharka. But there is issue. (no joke intended!) Your magazine promotes keeping dogs rather than hunting. This makes Sergei Very Upset. At first, Sergei reads magazine only for seeing what breeds are ugliest, and which make best game, but now, you have shown Sergei only puny babies. Sergei now prefers reading Matryoshka doll magazine, rather than puppy magazine. Puppy is barf, Matryoshka is not barf. Sergei's bear can talk- can your dogs talk, da? Sergei's neighbour's puppy come to yard frequently, but Sergei scares it with beheaded dog collection. Preferably, Sergei likes to stuff furry victims. People ask, "Sergei, why do you hunt Dogs?" Sergei no answer, Sergei hunt more, Sergei hunt with only Ushanka. *Nam silu daiot nasha vernost' Otchizne (We are given strength by our fidelity to the Fatherland)* The sacred phrase of anthem, is reason Sergei hunts. But you- you walk with confidence in your puppy magazine, how proud do you make your mama? As for me, I walk with pride and power for my fifty thousand hunted dogs...

*Iskrenne,
Sergei Zhestokiy.*

Dearest Mr. Zhestokiy,

I enjoyed receiving your letter in the mail. I find your input informative, I will make sure to write about bigger, more muscular dogs. I probably will replace some of them with some of my more tiny dogs. Most of our readers subscribe to our magazine because of our genuine love for dogs, whether or not we play with it from a dark sense of humor sometimes. Adding more sections to dog hunting would be aggressive towards our readers and their furry friends. I truly enjoy writing about dogs and writing about them being hunted would hurt my conscience. Once again, thank you for your feedback and maybe someday you could teach me how to hunt game (preferably not dogs) with only a Ushanka.

Sincerely,
Elise C.

Jack W., 12, West Virginia

December 14, 2022

Dear Sir,

I am writing to inform you of the great mistake you are making. I have recently discovered your modern gaming magazine, Game Cup. I have been greatly offended by the fact that you have never once mentioned the most superior form of gaming: antique tin games! I am an avid collector of antique games and own such rarities as an Andy Gump Can Kick and an original Wink – a – Root. I believe your magazine is doing a great disservice to antique games because the new generation will not be exposed to older games, and will only know your modern games.

I want you to change your magazine to include more antique games and their history. For example, I would recommend a section about antique stores that sell tin games, or how to play popular antique games such as Chippydinks, Wallycooters, or my personal favorite, Whiporooteboos. These changes would increase the quality of your magazine tenfold. If you do not change, many generations to come will only be exposed to inferior methods of entertainment.

Cordially,

Professor Doctor Jorge Hendriksen D. Ropsenkeller Esq. III
6 Butternut Ridge
Squash Village, Kentucky 28445

December 16, 2022

Dear Professor Hendriksen Ropsenkeller,

We here at Game Cup appreciate all your letters. But since you have sent over 30 letters this month, we are politely asking you to stop writing. Our post office box is full, so please wait at least a month before writing again. Any letters you send during this period will unfortunately not be read. We greatly enjoy reading and discussing your ideas at our staff meetings.

If you wish to read about antique games, there are such magazines as Whinkarootyboots Weekly or Telekeneticubbies Today. Are you familiar with these? Our team believes that if our magazine were to change its main focus, we would lose a large portion of our audience who enjoy reading about video games. We hope to find more letters from you soon once we empty our post office box.

Sincerely,

Jack W., Editor of Game Cup

Layla J., 9, Saudi Arabia

Dear Layla J.,

I am a self-taught eleven-year-old gymnast. I am writing to you because I struggle with my back handspring. I usually learn from YouTube, but I can't get my back handspring. I'm hoping that you have some tips or drills for it. I struggle with keeping together and I jump too high. My back handspring is way too short, and I don't know how to fix it. I am a huge fan of your magazine and I hope you respond back to this. Gymnastics is my whole world, and I am trying very hard to improve my skills. But I just can't perfect my back handspring!

I hope you can help me with this skill.

Sincerely,
Mei-Rose Chips.

Dear Mei-Rose Chips,

Thank you for your letter. I am very pleased that you asked me for this. I would be honored to help you with this difficult skill. You are so sweet to ask me for this, so here are my tips/drills for you. If you're looking to keep your legs together when you start your back handspring, keep your feet glued together and keep them pointing straight forwards. You can take a small soft toy and squeeze it between your knees or take a hair tie/scrunchie and tie it around your knees. Practice like this every day and soon your legs will start going together.

I looked through some drills for short back handsprings and I am sharing the best ones down for you. If your back handspring is short, you probably have the wrong technique. When you start your back handspring, start leaning back, don't lean forward. It helps to put down some chalk to see how far you need to jump. The taller you are, the longer your back handspring should be. Every time, set the chalk a little more back and try to jump back to it. Practice long jumps backwards instead of high jumps. These drills will help a lot but what you need mostly is a coach. (Since you said you were self-taught.) Do you have any local gymnasiums nearby where you live?

If you can't find a coach, you could book an online, live gymnastics coach. You might find this easier than YouTube.

Good luck with everything!

Yours truly,
Layla J.

Sarah S., 13, Alberta

Dear Editor,

I am a Third Culture Kid (TCK) from Ireland and have been reading your magazine since the first edition. Now I think I might have to stop reading because your advice has humiliated me.

You see, your last magazine was about trying not to forget about your inherited culture and how we shouldn't be ashamed of it, so I decided to show my culture to everyone. I am always bullied because of my accent, red hair, freckles and pale skin, but I decided I didn't care what they say.

One Monday morning I put on my green kilt and walked to school, playing my bagpipe. I was sent to the principal for violating dress code and for being a disturbance to the silence of classrooms. Once I changed out of my kilt, I realised none of the teachers appreciated me talking in Irish and I was sent to the principal again. The principal called my parents and now I'm at home, grounded.

Why are you spreading lies about how to live our lives in your magazine?!

Angry at your advice,
Fiona Mander

Miss Fiona,

I'm glad to hear from one of my dedicated readers! I want to thank you on behalf of the whole TCK team for following our magazine for this long already. We hope that you will continue to enjoy our monthly content.

Ireland is a very beautiful place; I've been there myself not too long ago. I am very sorry that you have been bullied by people for being different. Your culture is very special and of course it is important to not be ashamed of who you are, but I think you misunderstood the point of the magazine and went too far. If you can go around without listening to what the bullies say and proudly tell people that you're Irish, you are doing enough. People will know your inheritance, and that you are proud of it.

I hope you will find this information helpful,
Emily Desker

Justine B., 14, Alberta

Dear Madam,

I have recently found your magazine; however, I have a problem with the minimal safety precautions that you seem to take...

For instance, you only mention to the reader that a horse is a dangerous beast in your crash of the month part, and that only comes out once a month. I sincerely hope this helps.

With basically no regard, stay safe,
Karen

Dear Karen,

Thank you for the feedback. I must say that your letter took me by surprise as most people ask us to pull the monthly disaster for it scares some. We will not be able to add much more as we don't want people to stop reading our magazine, but we can provide a special note on the back as a little warning.

Sincerely,
The Editor

Brock S., 12, Alaska - WINNER

Dear Merriam-Webster Dictionary,

What are the weirdest words in your book?

Sincerely,
Andrew Lockwood

Dear Mr. Lockwood,

A great portion of the general populace creates a kerfuffle on that subject, often hurling expletives and labelling me a panjandrum and snollygoster for including words in the dictionary that are ad-hoc, difficult to understand, and bumfuzzling. I only acquiesce to the ballyhoo in an attempt to put an end to the argle-bargling.

I confidently pontificate to students without being sialoquent or pussyfooting, and sincerely hope my pauciliquent response satisfies your curiosity.

Arrivederci,
Noah Webster, Jr.

Jackson L., 13, South Carolina

(LETTER ONE)

My Dear Sir:

You have said in your magazine that you have a milk cow. I, therefore, must assume that you are an expert on that topic. I am planning to get a milk cow as well. Is it necessary, do you think, for me to procure two cows, or one?

Sincerely,
Sir Stone

Dear Mr. Stone:

I am indeed a great expert on cows and I can answer your questions. It is not necessary to get two, only one, unless you are starting a dairy farm. In that case, you would need 156.6 cows, or in a rare situation, 156.7. Raising a milk cow is a hard task, but trust me, it is worthwhile.

Most expertly,
Jackson L.

(LETTER TWO)

Dear Sir,

I have a major problem and have tried everything to solve it. No authority on this topic knows what to do. My dog will not stop killing chickens! What will put a stop to this?

Mr. S. Radin

Dear Mr. Radin,

I am not a dog expert, but three simple words will solve your problem: Sell your dog.

Most respectfully,
Jackson L.

Oakley L., 12, South Carolina

(LETTER ONE)

Miss Oakley,

In your latest magazine, did you not print this?!

“The hens were all in a rage
Quite immature for their age.
They were angry because
They had fought for some fuzz.
But it floated just out of their cage.”

Well! I must give you a piece of my mind! Think of it! Someone like ME, fighting over fuzz! Why, I'd get it way before any of the other hens. I'd never even have to fight for it! Of all the nerve to insult me. I refuse to lay you any eggs for your breakfast this morning.

Totally sincerely,
Miss Summer Hen

Dear Summer,

Kindest apologies for insulting you. I'm sure you'd catch that fuzz before Spring or Poppy, or Davy. Maybe not before Brooster the Rooster. But sorry anyway. And I'm sure you don't go into rages over fuzzes either, only limericks. I still demand that you provide us with eggs, or I shall have Jackson feed your share to well-mannered neat little Davy or Poppy. Agreed? If you do, I shall send you a copy of our next magazine and give you a good petting.

Regards,
Oakley

(LETTER TWO)

Miss Oakley,

I am angered. So are Millie and Wilder. And you wonder why? Do you?! It is because of your magazines. And why is that? Let me tell you: Your magazine mentioned those pesky little chickens. It mentioned that bulking milk cow, Fern. But did it mention your faithful, honest guard dogs? Well, did it?! I demand you acknowledge us.

Yours unfaithfully,
Prairie

Dear Prairie,

Ok, Ok. I shall put this letter in my magazine. Does that please you?

Your master,
Oakley