

KAMSC

84 Steps



Cover by Genevieve Sertic





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84 STEPS

*There is no elevator to success.
You have to take the 84 steps.*

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Letter from the Editors

As we get ready to start the 2011-2012 school year, all KAMSC students are getting ready for some big changes. Dr. Goudie is still directing the KAMSC Research Team, but his former classes have gone to Ms. Hach, who will be teaching them instead of biology. We also bade farewell to KAMSC's former director, Dr. Earhart, and our college placement specialist, Mr. Streeter. While we're sad to see them go, we're also happy to welcome three new faces to KAMSC's staff: Dr. Tanoff, Ms. Joyce, and Mr. Chopp, who will be fulfilling the roles of Director, College Placement Specialist/Student Advocate, and Biology Teacher (Honors and AP) respectively. Welcome to the KAMSC family!

In this issue, we've packed in more tips on how to survive the rigors of KAMSC than ever before, with a breakdown of all four years and tips and tricks from our editorial staff. (Well, not so much tricks. Tricks don't tend to work at KAMSC.) We've got an article for the environmentally conscious among you (who, by the way, may want to think about joining Ms. Hach's Earthlings group on Wednesday nights at Open Lab). Read the horrorscopes at your own risk; they're nothing short of... horrifying. Make sure to take a look at the freshman survey; it looks like we have an interesting incoming class. Rounding out our issue we have some book reviews and an unorthodox but rather cleverly written nerd music article. See if you can catch what's happening!

Get ready for another year of KAMSC everybody! It's going to be a blast!

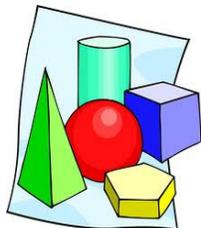
Grady Sertic
Samir Deshpande



How to Survive Freshman Year

by Genevieve Sertic

Freshman year in KAMSC can be challenging because it's new and different from your 8th grade year at your homeschool. You'll have to push yourself and give up some free time, but ultimately, KAMSC provides countless opportunities that make the extra work well worth it. Everyone at KAMSC wants to learn and succeed. No matter what school you're from, you're all in the same position: wondering if you'll survive freshman year. Hopefully, some of the subsequent survival tips will help you achieve that end.



At KAMSC, the teachers are supportive and want you to succeed, and the students are in general very supportive as well because they know what you're going through. It's true that KAMSC classes are a lot of work, but KAMSC is a helpful community that will let you make the most out of them.

Organizing and scheduling your time are important skills as well, and I had to make some changes to how I managed my time during freshman year. I've found two lifesavers in terms of time management: sticky notes and checklists. Anything that I needed to remember when I got to school or when I got home I could write down on a sticky note. I would advise buying some that are blindingly bright so you don't miss something important, like asking what's the difference between histograms and bar charts the day before the test, or remembering your friend's birthday. Checklists are great for weekends; just make up a list of all your homework. I tend to do the short, easy stuff first to get it out of the way and build up confidence (same idea works well on tests).

Students can sometimes overlook the helpfulness of Open Lab (Wednesday nights 6:00 – 7:30), which allows you to ask your teachers questions, study, finish labs, do homework, or just talk with your friends. I would suggest attending Open Lab as much as possible. Even if you have a weekly conflict, teachers are usually available before school to answer questions, which has been a great help.

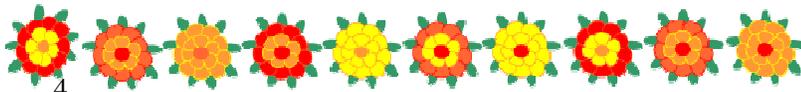
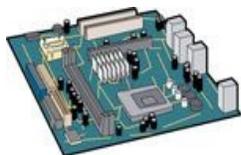
The three classes most of you will be taking are Integrated Math 1 (statistics and geometry), Information Technology (IT), and Biology.

Integrated Math 1 is fast-paced but certainly manageable. You have homework essentially every night that takes a fair amount of time (maybe about an hour a night), but your homework helps you fully learn the concepts presented in class. Each marking period, you are allowed three homework passes, but you still have to complete the homework assignment before the corresponding test. I would advise simply trying to get your homework done the day it is assigned; chances are you won't have much more time any other day of the week. Tests are nothing to stress out about, but after doing the assigned chapter review, check your answers and make sure you go back to the sections and notes that correspond with the questions you missed.

Information Technology teaches you practical applications of technology. Homework in this class often depends on how far you get on a project in class, and what you learn helps with your other classes; you can program your calculator for math and make cohesive tables and graphs for a lab report.

Biology has historically been the class that students have found most difficult, but with a new teacher at the helm I can't say much. Study hard (flash cards, study guides, and study groups helped me) and try your best, and the rest will take care of itself.

You learn a lot freshman year with all these new experiences. Have confidence in yourself and make it a great year.

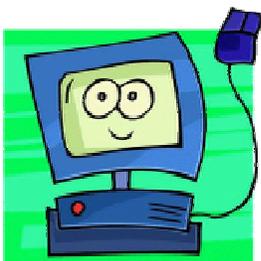
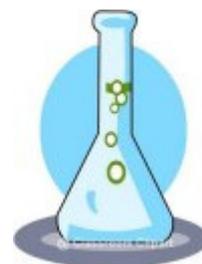


How to Survive Sophomore Year

by Brice Calco

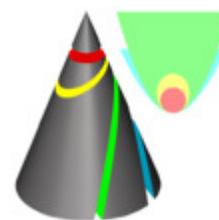
Welcome back fellow KAMSC nerds! You have managed to survive your first year here at KAMSC and now you are back for round two. Luckily, this year is known throughout the KAMSC realm as one of the easiest. However, take that statement with a grain of salt as it surely does not mean you have a free year ahead of you. Although, now that you have become used to KAMSC, the flow of things should ease up for you this year. As an emerging sophomore this year you will all be taking Chemistry with Dr. T, as well as Computer Science with Mr. Houtrouw.

While you will not be experiencing the same workload that you experienced last year, nor the new adjustments as in freshman biology, this year in chemistry will definitely not be a free ride. You will still need to utilize those study habits gained in freshman biology in order to aim for success on tests **and** stay ahead in homework. Expect daily homework assignments from Dr. T, as well as pop quizzes, and of course tests. However, you can look forward to plenty more labs and explosions with Dr. T this year, in addition to having fun and commitment in developing your research project with your team as the second half of the year begins.



Furthermore, you will also be replacing ninth grade IT (information technology) with CS (Computer Science) class. While last year focused more on software applications, video projects, and simple calculator programming, this year will introduce you to a more excellent and rigorous programming curriculum, while also providing you with a solid background into the history behind computers and their creators. Staying ahead and asking for help will be key to your success in this class. Luckily for you, however, there are numerous extra credit opportunities available ranging from computer programs, programming competitions, and even just simply doing well on quizzes and tests.

Finally, as far as math class the general portion of you will have Integrated Math II (Algebra 2) with Mr. Milka. Get ready for a fun-filled year full of Mr. Milka's humor and of course- learn to love Star Trek! For those in Math II last year you will be in line for a fun year with Mr. Alshehri for Pre-Calculus. Those who have completed pre-calculus already will be in Mr. Sinclair's class for Calculus. And, of course, there are also those in Advanced Calculus with Mr. Alshehri given that they completed Calculus freshman year.



So what other advice can I give? You already made it through freshman year here at KAMSC, a task impossible for many. The great philosopher Confucius once said "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Well you have already taken that first step getting through your first year at KAMSC. So utilize those habits gained last year ranging from biology flash cards to study groups and even just asking for a bit of extra help from your teachers. And for those habits that did not work last year, lose them! Only you know what works best for you. So let's keep going through this long journey and remember that you only have three more years left here at KAMSC and high school! Oh wait...

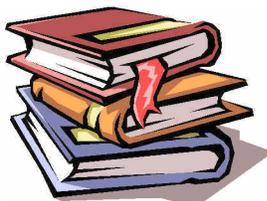


How to Survive Junior Year

by Grady Sertic

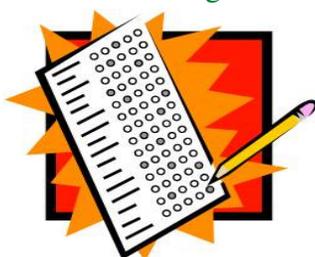
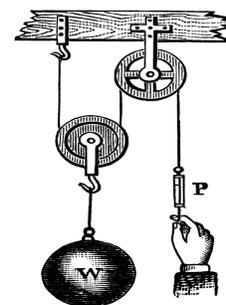
Welcome to KAMSC Junior year, judged by many to be the most difficult year of KAMSC. You've made it past two years of KAMSC math, a couple of computer courses, chemistry, and of course KAMSC biology, but junior year presents some challenges of its own.

While the first two years of KAMSC are comparable to a rigorous high school experience, starting in junior year the classes will feel more like college classes. Homework assignments are going to challenge you more overall even if there are fewer problems or questions; you're guaranteed to spend more total time studying and doing homework for your classes this year than ever before.



That's not actually a bad thing, however, because starting junior year you get to take classes that you want to take. Interested in computer programming? Take Mr. Houtrouw's APCS class. Interested in becoming a doctor? Maybe BioMed is the class for you. You'll find that whatever elective you choose, you'll be in class with the students who really want to be there to spark discussions, and that's a very rewarding learning atmosphere. And of course, when you're interested in the subject, you'll want to know it frontwards and backwards regardless.

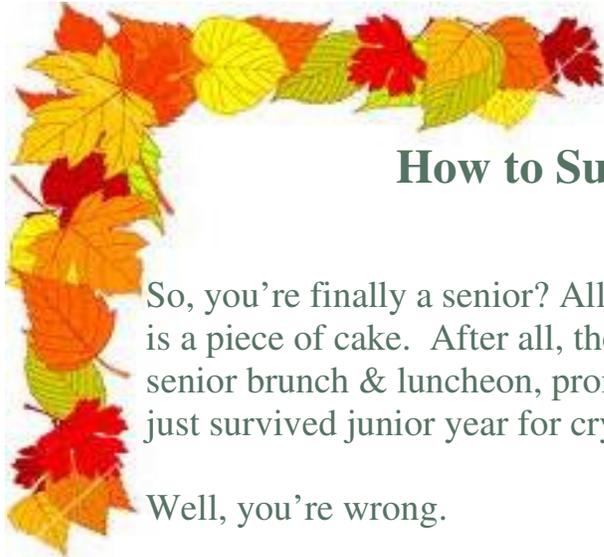
Then of course, there's physics, which as any senior will tell you, can be quite difficult until you figure out what you need to do in the class. The weekly quizzes can be tough if you don't have a good system in place (studying your notes for fifteen minutes a night is a small time investment that really helps) and the tests are tough because they assess your ability to solve physics problems not only correctly but quickly so that you can finish within the 45 minute time limit. Despite this, many seniors will be quick to tell you that physics at KAMSC was their favorite class of all time, which may seem strange to you at first but after the year's end you'll probably think the same thing.



Junior year is the Year of the Standardized Test. Make your life easier by remembering to schedule an SAT Reasoning Test (and at least two SAT Subject Tests, if you think you might be interested in one of the schools which require them) before the end of junior year, so that you can wrap things up by the start of summer in order to focus on other aspects of college prep, like the applications themselves. The ACT is automatically scheduled for you as part of the MME, which is a great way to ensure that you have at least one set of scores under your belt junior year. You might be tired of bubbling in answers by June, but it will be well worth it to have your testing done by then!

The important part about KAMSC junior year is to not give up. You may face some setbacks along the way, but it's important to remember that the teachers are here to help you and you should take advantage in class and at open lab to get any questions answered, especially before they pile up. As long as you're putting in a solid effort, you can expect everything to be just fine. And relax; junior year actually ends up being a lot of fun.





How to Survive Your SENIOR Year

by Fatima Mirza

So, you're finally a senior? All of your predecessors have told you that senior year is a piece of cake. After all, there's so much fun stuff to look forward to – the senior brunch & luncheon, prom, and graduation! You're thinking, "I've got this! I just survived junior year for crying out loud. It couldn't get any harder than this."

Well, you're wrong.

Senior year presents a new kind of challenge. You have survived through Ms. Hach's practicals. You have lived through Dr. T.'s explosions. And, yes, you even avoided an encounter with Mr. Sinclair's nurture stick. You have come to be surrounded by students and staff who have now become your family.

You have learned better study skills the hard way. After three years of constant work, you have figured out exactly how to study for a test. You have learned time management. And, most importantly, you have gotten rid of the little habit of procrastination...or not.

See, that's where the problem lies. To tell you the truth, senior year is academically no harder than what you have already gone through in the past three years. The hardest part of senior year is staying motivated, focused, and on schedule.

Everyone tells you that senior year is a blow off year, and while you may be able to breathe a little more than junior year, you still have a lot on your plate. Most importantly, you have to fill out those pesky little things that will decide where you will be for the next four years of your life: college applications.



Make sure to start early. And, make sure to finish early. Have an idea of what you want to write about for the Common App by the beginning of senior year. Once you're done with that, remember that you have supplements. And, once those are off, there's the counselor forms, the transcripts, and the fees. Finally, when December rolls around, you start again with scholarships. And January is the home stretch for final exams. Stay focused! Contrary to popular belief, your senior grades do matter.

Most importantly, though, make sure to enjoy your senior year. After all is said and done, you will miss these amazing four years. Cherish KAMSC for what it is, the good and the bad, because nothing else can compare.

Freshman Survey

By Grady Sertic

While welcoming the class of 2015 at the freshman orientation, we had our newest KAMSC inductees take a little survey so that we could get their responses on the issues du jour. The students had a few preset options, but they were also able to write in their own. Your dutiful editor tallied the votes.

Which subject at KAMSC most interests you?

Science: 29 | Math: 21 | Computer Science: 15 | Other responses: | I don't know: 1 | Science + Math: 1 | All Three: 2

Do you play cricket?

Yes: 4 | No: 53 | What's that?: 7 | Other responses: | Sometimes: 1 | I'm interested: 3 | I wish: 1 | I want to: 1

(Looks like KAMSC's cricket team might have a few new recruits. How about it, Mr. Sinclair?)

What would be the best mascot for KAMSC?

Kangaroo: 13 | Koala: 15 | Aardvark: 17
| Calculator: 17 | Other responses: |
Seahorse: 1 | Unicorn: 1 | USA Cow: 1 |
Bacteria: 1 | Homo Sapiens: 1 |
Wombat: 1

(Aardvarks are cool and calculators are very useful, but even so I'm a little sad to see that koalas didn't win. Koalas sleep for 16 to 18 hours a day. A day. That's almost as long as KAMSC kids are awake. Don't you want to be a koala?)



Who is your favorite character in the Twilight series?

That guy: 8 | That girl: 5 | That other guy: 19 | The bat(?): 22 | Other responses: | The moustache: 1 | Eww: 1 | Edward!: 2 | What's that?: 1 | The hot one: 1 | All the pretty people: 1 | Jasper: 1 | Why do you have this question?: 1 | The guy who annoys everyone else: 1 | Harry Potter: 2 | None: 1 | Zero: 1

(That other guy beat that guy by a landslide, but both paled in comparison to the bat. I understand why the bat was your favorite character, because I know if I ever got turned into a vampire, first I'd be bummed because of the whole bloodsucking thing, but then I'd be psyched 'cause I could turn into a bat. Also, who's Jasper? Did you misspell Casper? Is he the hot one?)



If you were granted one wish, what superpower would you choose? And no, you can't wish for more wishes.

Telepathy: 16 | Strength: 0 | Invisibility: 22 | Flight: 24 | Other responses: | To be Harry Potter: 1 | Stop time: 1 | To be like Spiderman: 1 | The power to do everything: 1 | More wishes: 1 | Omnipotent: 1 | None: 1

(Nothing too out of the ordinary here, except that "None" got more votes than "Strength". That's right. Here at KAMSC, we'd rather have no superpower at all than to be able to throw heavy things and smash stuff with our bare hands. I'd also like to take this time to address the person who wished for more wishes: I'm not happy with you, but I have to admire your spunk.)

Who would win in a fight?

Galileo: 12 | Copernicus: 9 | Newton: 16 | Einstein: 23 | Chuck Norris: 1 | I don't know: 1 | Me: 2 | Someone else: 1 | Stephen Hawking: 1 | Mr. T: 1

Who would win in a fight, prison rules?

Galileo: 19 | Copernicus: 6 | Newton: 21 | Einstein: 16 | I don't know: 1 | Me: 1 | Still Me: 1 | Someone else: 1 | OBAMA: 1 | Mr. T: 1

(I have to agree with the results here. In a regulation fight, Einstein would just grab a rocket and use all sorts of time dilation and length contraction to befuddle his opponents, netting him an easy win. However, if we're going by prison rules, Newton would just grab a chair while Einstein's looking for the aforementioned aspect and pulverize everybody with it. Sir Isaac wasn't a very nice guy.)



What word best describes your feelings towards coming to KAMSC?

Excited: 26 | Enthusiastic: 13 | Ecstatic: 9 | Elated: 4 | Other responses: | All: 6 | I don't know: 1 | Edible: 1 | Happy: 2 | Enjoyed: 1 | Adequacy: 1 | ?: 1 | Excited + Enthusiastic: 2 | Forced: 1 | Indifferent: 1 | Euphoric: 1



Horror-scopes

by Humza Mirza

Aries (March 21-April 19)

You look into the sky and all you will see are pigeons...pigeons and clouds. Additionally when you try to go home, you will be mysteriously greeted by one or two aliens. Don't worry; they will be gone in the morning.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

(Noun, genitive)

1. Astronomy. The Bull, a zodiacal constellation between Gemini and Aries, containing the bright star Aldebaran.

2. Astrology .

a. the second sign of the zodiac: the fixed earth sign.

b. a person born under this sign, usually between April 20th and May 20th. (Courtesy of Dictionary.com)

Gemini (May 21-June 21)

Look up, now look away. Now shake your head side to side, left to right. Pull your hands out and look at your palms while abducting your phalanges. Congratulations, anyone who was looking at you is now intimidated.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)

People will look at your face. Strangely, it will not bother you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Zombies! Zombies are all over town, run before it's too la

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Starvation will cause you to begin to digest the walls of your own kidneys...good to know.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your day will be fine. Read the following as fast as you can;
 WARNING: Viewer Discretion is advised. Or reader, but technically this is reading so you need to view the paper. Anyways, Discretion: the quality of being discreet, especially with reference to one's own actions or speech; prudence or decorum (Dictionary.com) What? Were you expecting more? Why don't you try writing these



horrorscopes. It's really confusing because good is bad and bad is good. Therefore you see horror through scopes. Speaking of horror you will be filled with it. Now have a horrible day, or a good one. Get it because good is bad. ANYways you will be confused.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your day is blue. The grass is green. Bananas are yellow. Yellow and blue make green. Therefore bananas during the day are green. Problem solved.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

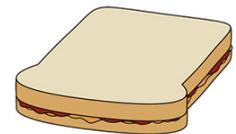
You are an incredibly smart decoder:
 aknjngangalWonderkagonilfajkngYoucnganCanangodfnhDecodea
 tionagfoThis

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You will make a sammich:

1. Gather peanut butter, jelly, and two slices of bread.
2. Proceed to put the jelly onto the bread

Ditch the jelly and peanut butter and order a pizza

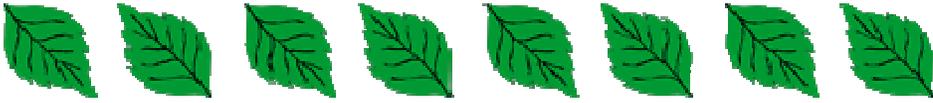


Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Water....get it....aquarius→water....I crack myself up!

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

3.1415 Cherry



Nerd Books

by Genevieve Sertic

Incarceron and *Sapphique* by Catherine Fisher

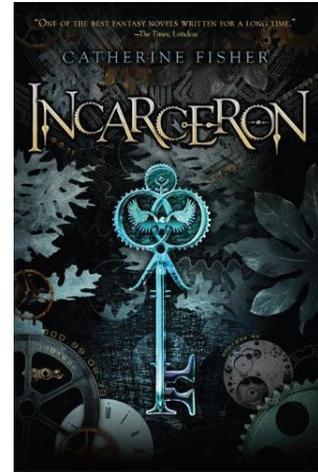
For a book that takes place in a futuristic dystopia, *Incarceron* is refreshingly original.

The story ricochets between two worlds: an intricate prison named Incarceron and the stagnant world outside this prison. Incarceron is an experimental utopia, a prison that at one point took in all the people of the outside world who had committed crimes, along with a group of people deemed wise enough to correct the lives of these prisoners. Nothing can enter or leave Incarceron,

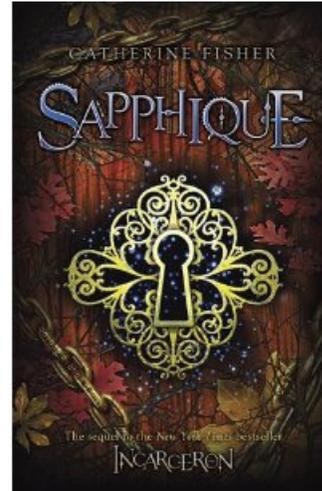
so when organic material runs out to repair living creatures, artificial means must be used. To those detained in Incarceron, the outside world is a legend, as is the one person said to have escaped.

However, the outside world is another kind of prison; the authorities there require that progress be eliminated and that the world must revert back to a time in the past. Artists and novelists must remake past works. No one in either world is sure that the other world exists, except a few important people outside Incarceron, including the Warden, an austere man in charge of the dystopian prison.

The book revolves around Claudia, the Warden's daughter, and Finn, one of Incarceron's prisoners who has seizures that grant him momentary visions of how to escape. Claudia hopes to get herself out of a less-than-ideal arranged marriage by proving her original betrothed is still alive, imprisoned somewhere in the depths of Incarceron. In Claudia's search to enter the prison and Finn's search to leave, they both find keys that allow them to communicate with each other.



The sequel, *Sapphique*, is just a continuation of the first book, so there's not much to say about it without giving the plot away. Sections of the story center around other main characters, and the occasional angst of the characters from the prison is a weakness of the book. In *Sapphique*, the concepts introduced in *Incarceron* are more intricately explored.



The story of *Incarceron* and *Sapphique* is a truly unique mix of science fiction and fantasy; it really doesn't feel like either. It brings up some interesting overarching themes, such as the romanticization of the past and whether or not truth matters. The plot twists and fluid writing style make it hard to put the books down. If you're the kind of reader who doesn't need all your questions to be paired with clean-cut answers and you'd like a fresh, creative story, I would recommend *Incarceron* and *Sapphique*.





Nerd Music

by Allyson Williams

I love summer: a break from studying, relaxation, awesome weather, and tons and tons of fun! One of my favorite things about summer is the relaxing, and laying out in the sun by the pool with my earphones in. My ipod speaker almost always blasts with everyone's favorite summer hits; the music makes my heart beat like an 808 drum. Summer is also a time to catch up with friends: I always ask, "Do you want to have a slumber party in my basement?" My friends call me up on my telephone and tell me all about their latest summer adventures. One of my friends told me about how on the Fourth of July, the fireworks lit up the sky, like it was Dynamite. Rumour has it that on the Fourth, the airplanes in the night sky looked like shooting stars! But I don't like to always hangout with my friends: some days I don't feel like doing anything besides laying in my bed. On those days I usually sit around all day until the sky goes dark, and then I like to make myself believe, that planet Earth turns slowly, while I catch thousands of fireflies. I keep my fireflies in a jar, and imagine that it's a jar of hearts. At the end of any summer day, I like to sit on my porch and watch the sunset while I listen to the tunes of the summer slowly fading away.



Going Green

by Genevieve Sertic

The school year can cause a needless accumulation of garbage. It's true that you've got to buy some things new, but there are plenty of ways to make use of what you already have or to recycle what you don't need any more.

- If you bring a lunch to school with you, try to use a non-disposable bag. Instead of zip-lock bags for your food, bring a washable container from home and a refillable water bottle. According to wastefreelunch.com, the average student makes 67 pounds of garbage each year. We can all help reduce that number.
- If you're tired of some old clothes that still fit you, try tie-dying, layering, or accessorizing to extend their usefulness.
- Clothes that you have outgrown but are in good shape can be given to a neighbor or Goodwill. If you're ambitious, you could have a garage sale and make some cash.
- If you're buying any books, you can save some trees and some money buying used copies online at places like Amazon or eBay. Often, you can't tell the difference between a new copy and a used one.
- Try to waste as little paper as possible. Start up a pile of scrap paper on your desk for print-outs that you don't need and old homework. You can use it later to write reminders to yourself or to visualize a math problem. Whenever you don't need a clean sheet of paper, don't use one.





The 84 Steps Team

Editors-in-Chief

Grady Sertic
Samir Deshpande

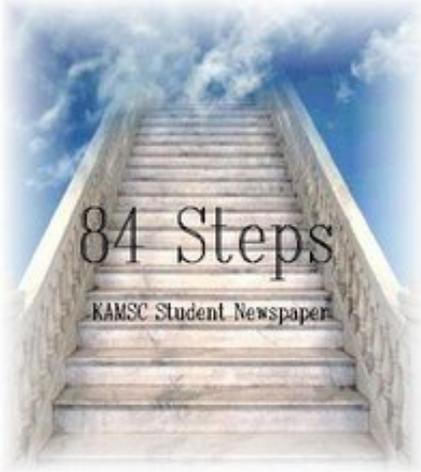
Staff Writers

Humza Mirza
Genevieve Sertic
Allyson Williams

Junior Editor

Brice Calco

Thanks to Fatima Mirza for allowing us to republish her article, “How to Survive Senior Year”, from last year’s Senior Edition.



We welcome new staff writers! Just send an email to kamsc84steps@yahoo.com!