



# MTK Newsletter Volume 2 Issue 2 The Future Starts Here

**Newsletter Highlights**  
**2024**

**November 7,**

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## **Message from the School Principal**

Dear parents and MTK community,

We are delighted to share excellent news. The board of directors has appointed Mr. Tural Abbasov as our new chief executive officer. With more than five years of devoted commitment to the MTK project, Mr. Tural is not strange to our school's growth and with his more than 20 years in the private sector, he brings an extensive corporative experience that will greatly benefit robust transformation we are embarked on.

He is a certified master trainer for the "Start and Improve Your Business" courses by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and has successfully completed various leadership and coaching programs. Currently, Mr. Abbasov is studying his Ed.M. (Master of Education) degree in the Private School Leadership Program at Teachers College, Columbia University.

I had the immense pleasure of working with Mr. Tural at a different international school in Baku, and more recently as co-executive team members at MTK. He has overwhelming charisma, strong management skills, and above all a huge sense of ownership for our school and what its name represents. I am very happy to continue working with him and develop our ambitious and challenging vision.

I want to express my gratitude to our outgoing executive director, Ms. Aygun Mikayilova. Her assertive leadership allowed us to pave the pathway towards the impressive evolution our school has accomplished. She will be actively attached to MTK as a senior advisor.

Another great news to our school. The Council for International Schools (CIS) has approved our transition to the next stage in the CIS membership process. We are very close to becoming a member of a well-established and reputed group of schools internationally recognized for their high standards and alignment with the education for the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Nelson Urrego, PhD

School Principal

## Preschool, by Ms. Adila Aliyeva Preschool Stage Leader

### 1. World Teachers' Day celebration at Preschool

On Friday, October 4th, our Preschool celebrated **World Teachers' Day** with a heartfelt tribute to our dedicated educators. The students expressed their gratitude with a joyful program that included songs, dances, and special congratulations for their teachers. It was a beautiful moment to acknowledge the incredible work our teachers do every day. The children's performances were full of energy and enthusiasm, bringing smiles and even a few tears of joy to their teachers. This celebration served as a wonderful reminder of the strong bonds between

students and teachers and the lasting impact teachers have on young lives. A big thank you to our amazing teachers for all that they do, and to our Preschool families for their continued support!



## 2. International Day of the Girl Child at Preschool

On Friday, October 11th, our school proudly celebrated **International Day of the Girl Child**. The day was filled with recognition and encouragement as the boys and teachers extended their heartfelt congratulations to the girls, acknowledging their talents, achievements, and potential. Together, we stand for empowering every girl to realize her dreams and make a lasting impact on the world.





### 3. Reception Group's Exciting Trip to IDEA Animal Care Center

On Friday, October 18th, our Reception group students enjoyed a memorable school trip to the **IDEA Animal Care Center**. The children were fascinated by the variety of animals they encountered and their unique habitats. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn more about the importance of animal welfare and conservation in a hands-on setting. The visit to the Animal Care Center not only broadened their knowledge but also instilled in them a greater sense of empathy and responsibility towards animals.



### 4. "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" during Assembly time

During assembly on October 18th, Ms. Leyla Umarova delighted our students by taking the beloved story of "**Goldilocks and the Three Bears**" to the stage. Through an engaging and lively performance, she brought the classic tale to life, captivating the children's attention and imagination. The interactive storytelling not only entertained the students but also helped reinforce important lessons about respect, curiosity, and responsibility. The children thoroughly enjoyed the performance and eagerly participated, making it a memorable experience for all.



## 5. Maths Week at Preschool

From October 21 to October 25, our preschool was buzzing with excitement as we celebrated Maths Week! The children had a fantastic time participating in a range of fun and engaging activities, all centered around maths. From interactive games to creative challenges, the week was filled with laughter, learning, and lots of exploration. It was a joy to see our young learners dive into the world of numbers with such enthusiasm. A big thank you to everyone who made this special week such a success!



## 6. Maths Week Wrap-Up

Ms. Ramila brought Maths Week to an exciting close with a special Assembly that explored how Maths is present in our everyday lives – at home, in school, and in various daily activities. She organized a range of engaging activities and games, making learning fun and interactive. The students participated enthusiastically in every event, showing remarkable excitement and energy. This week has surely sparked a new appreciation for math in our daily routines!



## 7. Focused Learning in Transition groups



This week, our Transition groups participated in an engaging series of training sessions on the theme, "*I Learn to Direct My Attention.*" Designed to sharpen focus, these sessions introduced techniques to improve selective attention and simple memory skills. Through interactive discussions and hands-on activities, students explored ways to manage their attention—building a solid foundation for effective learning.



#### **8. The Power of Words - Assembly by Ms. Hanneke**

Ms. Hanneke led a meaningful assembly focused on the *Power of Words*, reminding us all of the importance of speaking thoughtfully. She emphasized that while apologies can be made, the impact of hurtful words can linger. This message encouraged students to use kind and considerate words in their interactions, understanding that words hold lasting power. Through this assembly, everyone was inspired to choose their words carefully and to communicate with empathy and respect.





## Primary School, by Ms. Zulfiyya Rasulova Primary Stage Leader

### 1. Students Draw Their Favorite Teachers on Teacher's Day

During Teacher's Day, our students had the opportunity to draw their favourite teachers as they saw them. The event was filled with fun and laughter, as students poured their creativity into their artwork. Some drawings were playful and humorous, while others were heartwarming. Every teacher thoroughly enjoyed seeing themselves through the eyes of their favourite students, making it a memorable and special celebration for all.



### 2. Science Comes Alive for 2A Students in the Chemistry Lab!

Recently, the 2A class had the chance to visit the chemistry lab, where they observed fascinating reactions like the freezing and melting of substances. The students were absolutely thrilled to be in the lab, feeling like real scientists as they watched the experiments unfold. It was a memorable experience that sparked their curiosity and love for science. Our heartfelt thanks to

Mrs. Simone and Mrs. Gultaj for their incredible cooperation in making science an engaging and exciting subject for our students.



### **3. Primary Canteen Table Manner Winners**

This year in Primary, our classrooms have been working on practicing and improving their table manners at lunch. Primary students are focused on not wasting food, using polite words, and keeping their areas tidy. At the last assembly, the winners were announced, and the winning classes were rewarded with a special treat: they enjoyed their snack time in a different and enjoyable way.

It was a great way to celebrate their efforts in maintaining good manners and creating a positive atmosphere in the canteen. This special reward not only recognized their hard work but also motivated other students to continue practicing good manners during mealtime.



### **4. Promoting Fitness with a Fun Run for Students and Teachers**

To encourage physical fitness and a sense of fun, we organized a "Fun Race" event for all 5th-grade students on October 16th. This exciting event brought together students and teachers, providing a great opportunity to stay active and enjoy some friendly competition.

Students arrived in their sports uniforms and running shoes, ready to give their best on the track. The race took place in the Sports Hall, and the energy was high as everyone cheered on their friends and classmates. It was a wonderful morning filled with enthusiasm, laughter, and a shared commitment to health and well-being.

## 5. Grade 5 students visit Expo Center to support schoolmates

On October 25th, our Grade 5 students had the opportunity to visit the Expo Center to cheer on their schoolmates participating in this year's Green SAF competition. This year, two Grade 5 students—Khumar Agabayli and Aylin Bagirova—proudly represented our school in the event as part of our school team. The visit was organized to allow the entire Grade 5 group to experience the competition area and support their peers.

All the activities at the Expo Center were highly engaging, providing our students with an enriching experience and a chance to learn outside the classroom while cheering for their friends. It was a memorable day filled with school spirit and encouragement!



## 6. Our Primary Staff embraces Autumn with positivity and team spirit

Our primary staff teachers are known for their positivity, and they bring this uplifting energy into their classrooms every day. They always support one another, creating a warm and collaborative atmosphere. This time, they decided to welcome the autumn season with a colourful twist!

Each day, the staff chose a specific colour to wear, filling the staff room with shades of blue, white, green, pink, and black throughout the week. This fun initiative showcased their unity, support, and team spirit, making each day a little brighter. Their enthusiasm not only lifted each other's spirits but also set a positive example for our students, proving once again that a cheerful team makes a great school community.



## 7. Trip to Gobustan State Historical-Artistic Reserve

3A grade students of the Complex visited the Gobustan reserve on the initiative of the Azerbaijani language teacher Vusala Aliyeva. Students clarified the information they heard and read by asking various questions. The students were interested in the historical exhibits in the museum located here. They learned about the way of living, traditions, and daily life of the ancient people here. Also, the students got acquainted with the historical paintings on the rocks. Such trips will be continuously organized according to the wishes and interests of our students.

"People should always remember their roots!" (Heydar Aliyev)



## An unforgettable meeting with John Boyne

I, 5A student Akim, want to share my thoughts about an unforgettable meeting with you. Something very interesting happened at school today! We went to the Baku Expo Center to meet the famous writer, John Boyne. At first, I was very excited because the teacher read his book to us. When he talked about the characters in his book, I felt like I knew them! John Boyne was very friendly and smiling. He greeted us with a smile and started talking about his books. He said that writing requires a lot of thought and imagination. It was very interesting for me. Then he asked us questions. I gathered my courage and asked, "When you write a book, what do you ask your friends?" I asked. "Sometimes you just need an idea, and then you start writing it down," he said with a laugh. This inspired me so much!

At the end of the meeting, he signed for us. My book has his signature. Meeting John Boyne today was a great experience.





## Secondary School, by Mr. Atabay Guliyev Secondary Stage Leader

### 1. Teachers' Day

The Secondary stage of MTK celebrated Teachers' Day in a truly special way, honoring educators with an event full of joy and appreciation! The assembly was dedicated entirely to this occasion, with a variety of fun rubrics, songs, and dances prepared by students to show their gratitude for the dedication and hard work of their teachers. The atmosphere was filled with excitement as students performed, creating a memorable experience for everyone. Each performance symbolized the respect and admiration MTK holds for its teachers. Teachers left the event feeling valued and inspired, reminded of the profound impact they have on their students' lives.

### 2. World Mental Health Day

October 10th is World Mental Health Day. In this regard, the school week of October 7-11 was declared Mental Health Week at MTK. The MTK community highly values the importance of students' psychological well-being.

Mental health is as important as physical health, and by prioritizing it, we help our students thrive both academically and personally.

During this week, an interactive assembly was held with high school students, during which both students and teachers shared their thoughts on what is essential to understand about mental health, how to take care of it, and how we can support each other. Our school counselor held meetings with classes where students learned about basic emotions, how they relate to mental health, and how to care for themselves and others in a playful and accessible way. Additionally, our teachers incorporated discussions about mental health into their lessons.

We aimed to remind our students that it's okay to talk about their feelings and that seeking help is a sign of strength.

Together, we're raising awareness and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health issues. We strive to create and maintain a healthy emotional environment for every student at MTK.



### 3. The assembly dedicated to Day of Restoration of Independence and Liberation of our Territories

On October 16, 2024 , Secondary School held a special assembly to celebrate the Day of Restoration of Independence and honor the liberation of Jabrayil (October 4), Fuzuli (October 17), Zangilan (October 20), and Gubadli (October 25). This assembly brought together students and teachers in a heartfelt tribute to the spirit of independence and resilience.

History teacher Mr. Nurlan Asgarli and English teacher Ms. Aygun Samadli provided an insightful presentation on the significance of independence and unity. They discussed Azerbaijan’s journey toward freedom, emphasizing the importance of standing together through challenges.

Students viewed two impactful videos: the first honored Independence Day and included stories of repression victims, with a particular focus on Mushfiq’s unjust execution. The second video captured the emotional news coverage of Azerbaijan's liberated lands, with TV presenters and martyrs' families sharing in the joy and relief of regained territories.

This assembly served as a profound reminder of the sacrifices made for freedom and the collective unity that continues to strengthen our nation.





#### **4. Recent University Fair and Upcoming Koc University Info Session**

On October 10, our Complex hosted an education fair with representatives from some of the leading universities worldwide. The fair held with participation of 26 university representatives was intended for the participation of 9-12 th grade students and their parents. By participating in the fair, our students met directly with the university officials and obtained extensive information about suitable programs, as well as about the bachelor's degree, Foundation program, scholarship opportunities, tuition fees, discounts, program benefits.

The education fair proved highly beneficial for our students, providing them with in-depth knowledge to help in their university selection process. We thank Ms. Aysel Aliyeva, our University Counselor for organising this event.

Ms Aysel is also delighted to let you know that Koç University will be visiting our complex on November 26 to provide info session to secondary school students with different academic programs, admissions process, and campus life. Koç University, based in Istanbul, is a renowned institution for higher education. Known for its innovative teaching methods and focus on personal growth, the university offers its students an exceptional, globally recognized education.

Students will have the opportunity to receive detailed information about various programs that match their interests, scholarship opportunities (both full and partial), tuition costs, discounts, and program benefits.

##### **Event Details:**

- **Date:** November 26
- **Time:** 14.00



- **Location:** MTK Assembly Hall We encourage 9-12 grade students to attend and take advantage of this opportunity to interact with Koç University's team. Don't miss this opportunity to get a step closer to your higher education goals!





## 5. Online briefing for participants of the International Space Olympiad

On October 28, 2024, at 12:00, an online briefing was held for participants of the International Space Olympiad. The event aimed to inform students about the project and support them in understanding the structure of the competition. Initial information about the project was presented to the 20 selected students. Division Head Atabey Guliyev explained the project's goals, encouraged the students, and highlighted the importance of maximizing this opportunity. Project Coordinator Alesker Asadov provided details on the stages of the competition and the scientific and technical challenges students might face. Facilitator Gultaj Gehramanova

discussed the methodologies and scientific values essential for success. Representatives from both the International and National Committees outlined the competition's requirements and expectations and emphasized the potential for growth in Azerbaijan's space science sector.

With the guidance of the coordinator and facilitator, the 20 students established their future action plans and strategies during the meeting. This preparation aims to equip them with essential knowledge and skills for success in both the competition and the broader scientific field.



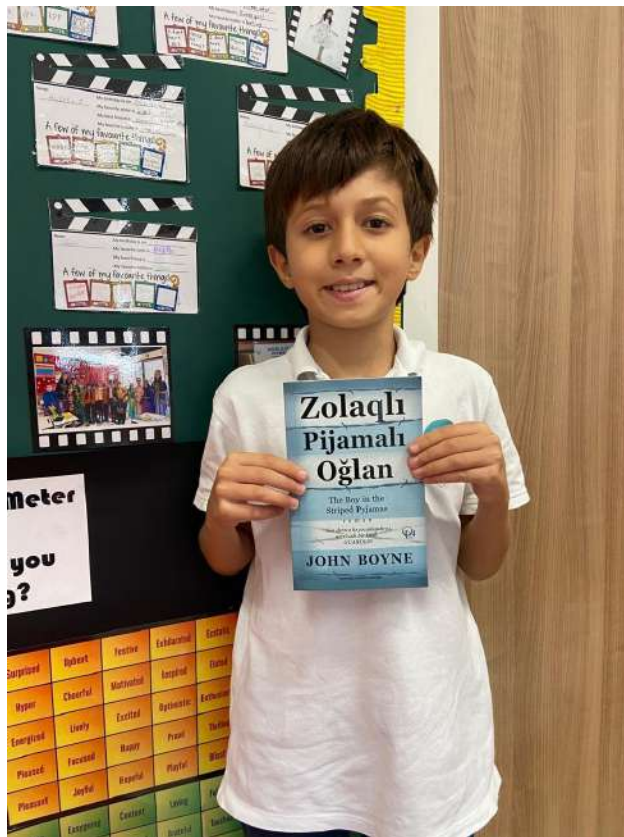


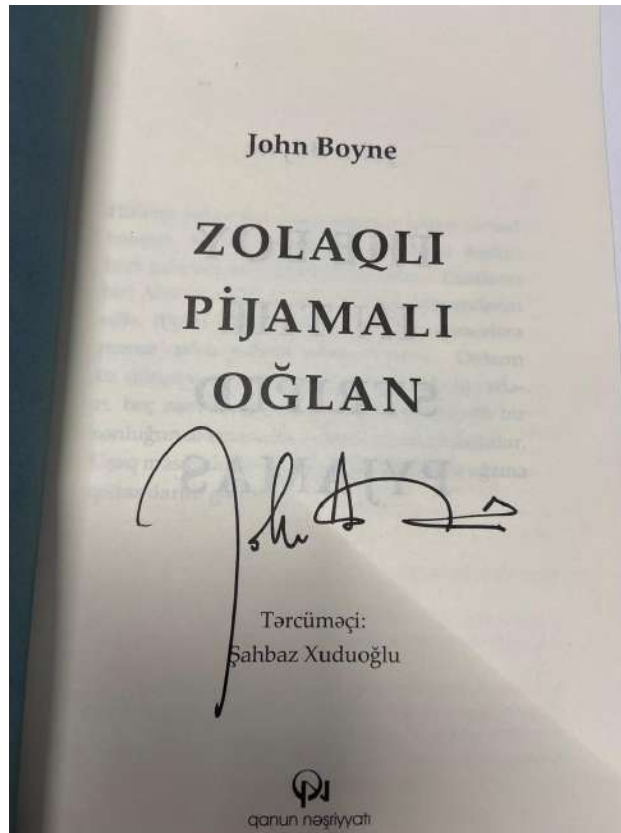
## **6. Meeting John Boyne at the 10th Baku International Book Fair**

On October 3, 2024, our Grade 5A, 10i, 10R, and 10A students visited Baku Expo Center to meet famous Irish writer, John Boyne, the author of widely acclaimed novel, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. During the meeting, John Boyne answered the students' questions and signed his books for his readers. Our students asked questions about the origin of the novel, writing process, and the famous film adaptation. Our Grade 5A student, Akim Rzazade's question was chosen as the most interesting and John Boyne presented Akim with a signed copy of his book.









## **Our Students Shine Again at the SAF Festival, by Alasgar Asadov, STEAM and ICT Coordinator**

As with every year, our students once again participated in the STEAM Azerbaijan Festival (SAF) this year, showcasing their skills and achieving remarkable success. From the beginning of the academic year, they diligently completed assigned tasks, advanced through the preliminary

stages to reach the finals, and demonstrated excellent teamwork, resulting in recognition across multiple categories at the festival.

**VidX Category - "From Waste to Art":** One of the most engaging segments of this year's festival was the VidX category. In this segment, lower-grade students were assigned the topic "From Waste to Art," where they created unique compositions from waste materials. The second and most critical part of the project involved producing an animated short film using the Stop Motion program. Our students, Aylin Baghirova and Khumar Aghabeyli, led by their mentor Aytel Asadova, completed and presented the project on time and with high quality, winning 3rd place in this category.

[Üsyan Zəfəri](#)

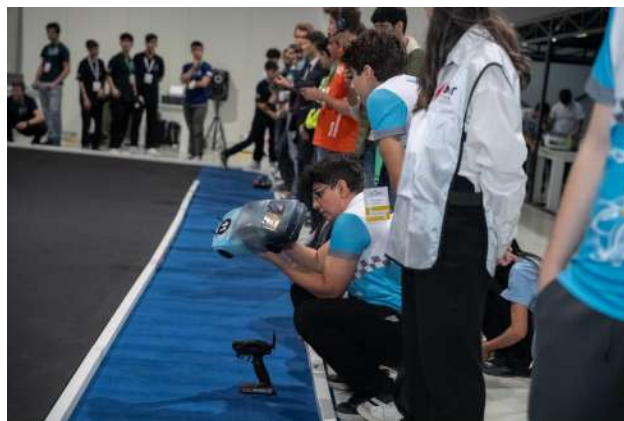
**EcoCoding LEGO Robot Competition:** Another intriguing category of the SAF festival was the EcoCoding robot competition, in which our students Hasan Aliyev and Huseyn Abdullayev participated. They had to complete various tasks on a map with the robot they designed. With support from their mentor, Gunel, they conducted trial runs to make the robot more functional and agile. At the festival, they were awarded the "Best Design" prize.

**H2 Grand Prix Pro - "Best Innovative Project":** One of the festival's most challenging and exciting categories was the H2 Grand Prix Pro. Our 11th-grade students built, designed, and programmed a hydrogen-powered race car from scratch, conducted trial runs, and successfully completed the race. Ali Aliyev took on the role of the driver, while Adnan Jabbarov and Davud Kazimov provided mechanical support at the PitStop, and Hashim Sadiqov monitored the vehicle's software. Their innovative approach earned them the "Best Innovative Project" nomination.

**Support and Experience Gained:** Throughout the festival, other students from our school also attended Baku Expo Center as part of the support team. They gained valuable insights by exploring various projects, enhancing their knowledge and exposure to different innovations.

**Conclusion:** As the STEAM department coordinator, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to all students and staff who contributed to this successful performance. I would also like to emphasize that participating in such projects and competitions not only supports academic growth but also develops critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership skills in students. Dear students, we hope to see you in future festivals!











## **International Teachers' Day at MTK, by Mahnur Khankishiyeva, Azerbaijani Language teacher**

October 5th marks International Teachers' Day, celebrated since 1966 following a decision by UNESCO. That year, UNESCO also adopted a recommendation document aimed at elevating the status of teachers. This day honors those who dedicate their lives to the noble profession that shapes the bright future of the nation. International Teachers' Day provides an opportunity worldwide to celebrate the efforts of teachers, attract bright minds and talented young people to the profession, find ways to retain them in this field, and reflect on possible solutions.

In Azerbaijan, International Teachers' Day has been celebrated since 1993. This day is recognized at the state-level. Teaching is one of the world's most challenging, honorable, and noble professions. Through teachers' efforts, society is shaped, producing educated and knowledgeable individuals with broad perspectives and exemplary moral character. Individuals who, in turn, contribute to the growth of society. Those actively reinforcing our nation's independence today are indeed the outcome of teachers' dedication. Teachers are the architects of the creation of a new society and have made invaluable contributions in shaping each of us into worthy citizens. On this occasion, an event took place in the auditorium of our



Complex, featuring presentations by Leyla Asgarova, a student of class 10a, and Said Valiyev, a student of class 9r1. The students delivered kind words and performances, while engaging videos created collaboratively by teachers and students were showcased. Department heads, Mr. Atabay and Ms. Sahiba, took the opportunity to wish the teachers success on this honorable path and expressed their gratitude.





## 6i3 Students' Trip to Uzeyir Hajiyov's House Museum, by Gumru Shahmaliyeva, Secondary Science teacher

On a recent educational excursion of 6i3 students had the opportunity to explore the rich cultural heritage of Azerbaijan through a visit focused on the life and contributions of Uzeyir Hajibeyov, a prominent composer and the author of the Azerbaijani national anthem. Known as the "father of Azerbaijani classical music," Hajibeyov's legacy is deeply intertwined with the cultural landscape of Shusha, a city renowned for its historical significance and artistic heritage.

Uzeyir Hajibeyov was born in 1885 in Shusha, which is often regarded as the cradle of Azerbaijani culture. His work not only revolutionized Azerbaijani music but also played a crucial role in the development of the nation's identity during a pivotal time in its history. By blending traditional Azerbaijani musical forms with Western classical techniques, Hajibeyov laid the groundwork for a new genre that celebrated Azerbaijani folklore while also embracing contemporary influences.

During the visit, students engaged in various activities designed to deepen their understanding of Hajibeyov's life and music. They explored the historical context of his works, learning how his

compositions, such as "Leyli and Majnun," not only reflected the socio-political climate of his time but also resonated with themes of love and longing that are universal. This engagement was particularly significant as it highlighted the role of music as a form of cultural expression and national pride.

The excursion included interactive sessions where students listened to excerpts from Hajibeyov's operas and songs. This auditory experience allowed them to appreciate the intricacies of Azerbaijani music and understand how Hajibeyov skillfully incorporated elements of the mugham, a traditional genre that is deeply rooted in the region's cultural heritage. Discussions also revolved around the importance of preserving cultural identities through art, emphasizing how Hajibeyov's works continue to inspire contemporary musicians and artists.

In conclusion, the students' visit to the legacy of Uzeyir Hajibeyov served as an enriching experience that connected them to Azerbaijan's national identity through music. By studying Hajibeyov's life and contributions, they gained a greater appreciation for the cultural narratives that shape their society, fostering a sense of pride and continuity in Azerbaijan's rich artistic heritage.









## **Certificate Awarding Ceremony, by Nargiz Babayeva, IGCSE Coordinator**

October 25, 2024 was a day to remember for the students of Modern Educational Complex named in Honour of Heydar Aliyev. This time the school Assembly was dedicated to the students who successfully completed their Cambridge Checkpoint, IGCSE and AS-A Level programmes.

The Ceremony started with the information session on IGCSE and AS-A Level Programmes presented by respective coordinators Nargiz Babayeva and Khadija Jafarova to promote awareness about the Cambridge qualifications and their significance.

The School Principal Mr. Nelson Urrego opened the awarding ceremony with a speech and emphasized the importance of setting smart goals and dedicating to the personal growth.

Later the Head of the Secondary School Mr. Atabay Guliyev delivered the speech and encouraged the students to keep working hard. Then the students were invited to the floor to get their certificates. Each student beamed with immense pride and felt deeply appreciated while receiving their certificate.

At the end of the ceremony, Grade 11i students Hashim Sadigov, Jamil Gadimov, Zuleykha Ismayilova and Davud Hashimov delivered their speeches where they thanked their teachers, fellow students and families who supported them throughout their IGCSE journey and shared their exam tips with the lower secondary students.







## **Profile: Meet our Secondary Science Coordinator Ms. Simone Blake. Interviewed by Mr. Nelson Urrego**

NU: Ms. Simone, good day. How are you? And thank you for accepting this invitation to connect and allow our MTK Newsletter readers to know more about you.

SB: Good day- buenos días para usted señor! It's an absolute pleasure to accept this invitation.

NU: Hahaha, buenos días Ms. Simone, let me start by expressing my gratitude for the positive transformation you have led in the Science department. What made you fall in love with Science and how was your journey to become a successful and inspiring science teacher (and leader)?





SB: I first was introduced to a form of science in my home before learning in school. Growing up I lived with my grandparents and many times I had the responsibility to care for them. My grandmother was unfortunately rather sickly and so I learned from a very young age to administer bandages, helping with medication and it's from there the practical application of science helped me to develop an interest in the sciences from a very young age. Biochemistry is my soft spot. I love learning about nutrition and how that impacts the body, Chemistry with all the different reactions and elements which make up the body and hormones however science is so broad. By working hard in all subjects, you can gain access to experience the wide scope of science. I think one of the most interesting and exciting experiences for me in my academic lifespan was studying Forensic science for a time at university! Like beauty, success is in the eyes of the beholder. I believe I am still working towards being successful and that is because I try not to be complacent in learning something new or in refining my skills. At the start of my teaching career, I saw a documentary about underprivileged children wanting to learn but the families didn't have money to pay for fees, books or had to walk miles because of deprivation or poverty. I made a vow to myself that as long as I have life in me and as well as access, I will not take opportunities for granted. This is why I pursued my Masters qualification and additional skills that have come along the way and sharing that information with others also esteems the people I work with. Everyone therefore gets the opportunity to grow with me as a team.

NU: Thank you for sharing Ms. Simone, how inspiring story and how interesting your journey has been to become a science enthusiast and teacher. Is MTK your first international experience? What challenges have you found as an international teacher and how have you approached them?

SB: This is my first international experience and it has been a wonderful dream. Back home I was never one to venture far away from family or go to the big city like London to work and so being able to share this experience with my family has helped to overcome some of the anxieties that would normally come with moving and working abroad. I am **extremely thankful** for having a supportive husband who counsels me in important decision-making concerning our family. As a woman, in a foreign place with a young family, without that support network I can imagine it can be a challenge for some. However, in my experience, coming to a place like Azerbaijan, the people are so welcoming and friendly in comparison with some of the places I have lived back in the UK. I genuinely call MTK my “extended family”. The expectation here is based on my skills rather than preconceived ideas of my (cultural) background. I am treated no differently, I am encouraged and motivated by my colleagues, SLT and my team. The environment that MTK has created for me and what we aspire to have really makes it easier to settle (for me) and grow as a professional and that is something that I am truly grateful for.





NU: I remember your kindness and welcoming vibe when we met in March, but what really surprised me was how well you got involved with the local community and how advanced you were in the use of the Azerbaijani language. What do you think makes the Azerbaijani culture so unique and what aspects of the school you appreciate more?

SB: Hahaha that is so kind to say. I truly think the heart of an international school is the people that it represents. People come from all walks of life and the workplace is one of those places where different energies can connect. The last thing is being in a place where you are not

wanted and not appreciated and on a scientific level, this transcends to your mood and overall wellbeing. Many people have the perception that going to the Western countries you have many more opportunities but in actual fact, I have come here and have seen/ experienced so many opportunities. I haven't explored the culture outside of Baku City!! Local staff and expat teachers who have travelled around have told me plenty of positive things about Azerbaijan, the food and the family spirit and so if the culture is anything like what I have experienced so far, it is my mission for this year to travel wider and learn more!

NU: Ms. Simone, you have supported and championed interesting projects: the science fair, the compost initiative, etc. what further endeavours are in the horizon for the science department?

SB: The MTK Science department is evolving. We are in the development stages of creating a dimension of education that provides learners with both the knowledge and hands-on experience to cope with the demands of the real world. Already our wonderful team have put on the initiative to offer a science club for Primary learners to capture their attention from early and both myself and Ms Gulaya who is the Primary Science Coordinator have made it one of our goals to bridge the gap between primary and secondary. Through this, we have had primary teachers being supported by and pupils gaining first-hand experience of practical experiments and being taught in the laboratories by a science specialist. How many schools in Azerbaijan can say that happens in their school with confidence? With the strategic steps the school is making working towards CIS Accreditation status, we are seizing this opportunity to explore different pedagogical practices like project-based learning, that will encourage learners to use a wide range of skills learnt across all disciplines to communicate and get a larger awareness of the world around them. Looking at the Sustainable Goals and *how* science impacts achieving those goals, really tells how important the sciences are and how science needs to be accessible to all learners, because the knowledge learnt here truly impacts the way people live, in some shape or form.





NU: Ms. Simone not only are you an inspiring teacher, but also you are a talented singer. Is this a hobby, or a potential loss for science in favour of an artistic dream J?

SB: Hahaha oh geez! When I was younger, at one point I wanted to be a singer. I give credit to my mother who was my first music teacher. From young I realised that it is a very competitive field and that there is no harm in entertaining a hobby that generates some sort of revenue. But I also studied AS Level Drama and Theatre studies, and I graduated in my first degree with Honours in Media & Communications where my dissertation was a 2-hour radio show! It truly helps to have a wide skillset where you can reach everyone at different levels. Being multi-faceted helps you to be versatile in such a fast-paced, dynamic world. Working in retail and several years in accounts bridged the gap in life-skills where access at a time was limited. Having the chance in life to explore, make mistakes and learn from them helped me to grow as a person and do something that I like so... *IF* science should ever fail me in the future, look out for me on the TV!

NU Ms. Simone, once again thank you very much for your openness with our readers, and we wish you all the best in your teaching and leadership role at MTK.

SB: Again, it was my pleasure, thank you! Hashtag MTK Science "Watch this space!" LOL



## **Our Trip to Absheron National Park, by Miras Bekzatuly, Grade 10i student**

On October 23rd, our class embarked on an unforgettable journey to Absheron National Park, accompanied by our homeroom teacher, Ms. Aysel, and our geography teacher, Ms. Aliya. We departed from school at 9:30 a.m. after breakfast, traveling over an hour by the school bus to the stunning Shah Spit on the Absheron Peninsula.

As we entered Absheron National Park, our bus took us a few kilometers in, and then we continued on foot for about 20-30 minutes along the spit. The walk was refreshing, with the wind blowing steadily, but not too harshly. The natural beauty around us was breathtaking, with vast open skies and endless, azure water, creating an atmosphere of peaceful solitude.

Our Geography teacher, Ms. Aliya, provided fascinating insights into the formation of the spit. She explained how natural processes like prevailing winds and longshore drift shaped this unique landform, sharing knowledge about different types of sand dunes, the composition of the spit, and the unusual flora and fauna of the area. We had the opportunity to see and explore the material we had studied in our textbooks in real life.

Reaching the tip of the spit, the easternmost point of Baku, known as Şah Dili(Shah's Tongue) felt surreal, as we stood completely surrounded by water, with no buildings or other signs of civilization in sight. It was a rare, marvelous experience that made us feel truly connected to nature.

As we made our way back, we witnessed an extraordinary sight — a boundless flock of birds, likely thousands, migrating in preparation for winter. This beautiful moment left us all in awe. Overall, the trip was both educational and deeply memorable, and we returned to school with a new appreciation for the natural beauty of our country.











## **8A and 8R students at Azerbaijan State Pantomime Theatre, by Umhani Hajiyeva, Grade 8A student**

On October 20th, together with the teachers and students of our school, we watched the play "The Overcoat" by the Russian writer Gogol at the Azerbaijan State Pantomime Theatre. At the beginning of the play, the silence of the actors seemed very strange to me. However, later on, I started to understand the storyline through the actors' gestures and facial expressions. Along with the actors, the second main character in the play was the "overcoat" they wore. This is because the overcoat was very important to the main character, Akaky Akakievich, and its theft influenced the events of the story.

The scenes depicted in the story were not directly portrayed in the play. This performance, which reflected more of the psychological and mental states, was described by the director as "psycho-plastic hallucination." In the play, the overcoat symbolized material values such as status and respect, showing how people have become slaves to material wealth.

In one of the scenes, everyone takes turns wearing the beautiful "overcoat," and whoever wears it gains power and authority, treating others however they wish. This demonstrates how people become enslaved by wealth and power.

Those who think their entire existence consists only of the "overcoat," that is, the material world, are willing to do anything for it. People who do not treat others equally unless they have the "overcoat" feel worthless and destroyed once they lose it.

At the end of the play, the director symbolically puts the actors inside the pocket of the "overcoat" to show that we are slowly becoming slaves to the material world.

I believe the play made my classmates think just as much as it affected me. I would like to thank the organizers, the Azerbaijani language and literature teachers, for their support in organizing our free time so effectively.





## Prison Break, review by Javad Gasimov, Grade 8i2 student

*Prison Break* is a TV series about two brothers, Michael Scofield and Lincoln Burrows. Lincoln is wrongly sentenced to death, and Michael comes up with a smart plan to help him escape from prison. The show aired from 2005 to 2017 and has five seasons.

In the first season, the focus is on Michael's plan to break out of prison. He's a brilliant engineer, and he has tattoos covering his body with hidden clues to help him escape. The show is full of excitement and tension, with each episode making you wonder if the plan will work.

As the series goes on, the story becomes bigger than just a prison escape. The brothers face more dangers, including a mysterious organization that wants to harm them. The stakes get higher, and the story becomes more complex.

One of the best things about *Prison Break* is the exciting storyline. The idea of someone breaking out of prison using a genius plan is thrilling, especially in the first season, which is one of the best parts of the show. The characters are also a strong point. Michael is calm and smart, while his brother Lincoln is tough and emotional. Their relationship makes you care about their journey. Other characters, like the dangerous T-Bag, add more drama and excitement to the show.

However, as the seasons go on, the story becomes more complicated. What started as a simple prison escape turns into a larger conspiracy with lots of twists and turns, which might be confusing for some viewers. Also, the show repeats some ideas, like breaking out of more prisons, which can feel a bit overused.

Overall, *Prison Break* is a thrilling series, especially for fans of action and suspense. The first season stands out as the best, but the whole series is worth watching for its excitement, clever plot, and interesting characters.





## My Travel Experience to China, by Yusif Garashov, Grade 8i2 student

I spent 10 days, or 240 hours, in China, and honestly, it wasn't the experience I had imagined. From the moment I landed, things just felt off and, at times, frustrating. I always thought visiting China would be an exciting adventure, but the reality didn't quite meet up with those expectations.

One of the biggest issues was the language barrier. Even in big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, I really struggled to communicate. Hardly anyone spoke English, and I found it really tough just to get by with basic phrases. Simple things, like ordering food or getting directions, ended up being much harder than expected.

The air quality was another big problem. The pollution, especially in those major cities, was much worse than I thought it would be. The smog was so thick, and after a few days, I felt completely drained. I had to wear a mask just to feel okay outside, which kind of ruined the whole experience of sightseeing.

The crowds were something I wasn't prepared for either. Every place I visited, like the Great Wall or the Forbidden City, was just packed with people. It was impossible to feel relaxed or really enjoy the sites with so many people pushing and shoving all the time.

On top of that, the tourist spots felt overly commercialized. There were vendors everywhere trying to sell overpriced souvenirs, which made the experience feel less authentic than I had hoped.

In the end, the 10 days I spent in China weren't what I had in mind. While the country itself has so much potential, the trip turned out to be more stressful than enjoyable. I wouldn't be rushing to go back anytime soon.



1 - <https://www.beijing-visitor.com/>

## Scythe by Neal Shusterman, book review by Oghuz Zeynalli, Grade 9i1 student

Neal Shusterman's dystopian novel *Scythe*, first published in November 22 2016, is the first book of the *Scythe* trilogy and Neal saw it as the most important part of the story. The book is based on the idea where humanity has conquered death itself, exploring deep theories through its appealing narrative. The author creates an immense world with moral and ethical problems in a futuristic environment, and multiple worlds that allow one to escape.

The story's protagonists are Citra and Rowan, teens must learn how to be gleaners, who are individuals that take part in the spiritual order of the scythes by 'gleaning' people in order to prevent overpopulation. What makes *Scythe* so unique is how it questions the existence of death in a world where dying has become something of a myth. Neal's style is a rare combination of combined drama and philosophy; the pressures of a consequence-free world result in conflict and character development as readers navigate the brutal story.

I have begun reading this book as of summer 2022, I couldn't help but feel drawn to this book's philosophy and fictional tale where they explain the experience's of two different character's. This fictional tale has given me a different view of moral's and critical thinking. I personally believe *Scythe* can be used in schools as more than just an engaging story, it inspire's students to think critically about morality, about life and death, and the responsibility of morals. The same point of view can be established in classrooms by using it as a part of literary lessons, which would could assist in developing critical perspectives and in exploring deep ethical issues. The book also present's interesting figurative language and strong use of vocabulary that could instruct student's to use these powerful vocabulary in their exam's, homework and even write their own book review's!



**Thank you for reading!**



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