

1st Place: The Kaaba

Abdulaziz Almutawa

Kaaba is the destination Muslims face towards when they pray five times a day from any part of the world. Kaaba is located in Saudi Arabia in the western part of the country. It is located in a city called Makkah. It's a special city because it's divided into two main parts. The first part is where anyone can visit, while the other part is only for Muslims. There are signs that show the limits of the holy place where non-Muslims can't go further. There are two routes for the city while you're approaching it. The first one is for Muslims and the other is for non-Muslims. Kaaba is a holy place because it was the first Mosque on earth. Kaaba is the most sacred site for Muslims and any practicing Muslim must visit it at least once in their life.

Firstly, the only way to reach Kaaba is by car because the terrain of this city makes it impossible to build an airport. As you enter the holy part of this city you'll notice amazing mountains on both sides of the road. The unique feature about those mountains is the rocks that they formed from. They seem like black rocks I've never seen in my life. As you approach, you will start to notice that there is a tall building with a clock inside it. This is a group of hotels and at the middle there is a clock that can be seen from a long distance. If you go there at night you will notice that this clock produces a light that turns on at the prayer time to inform people who can't hear the "Azan". Azan is the Muslim call for a ritual prayer. In addition, this clock considered as the biggest and tallest watch in the world.

Moreover, once you approach, you will notice seven minarets or tall buildings. After you arrive

to the holy Mosque you'll stop using a car to move around and you'll walk or you'll have to use a wheelchair if you can't walk. Once you enter the surrounding area of the holy Mosque, you'll step onto a white special stone platform. What's special about those stones is that they have a steady temperature and if you walk over it at summer or winter you won't feel the effect of the temperature. This platform is all around the holy Mosque and at the end of it there are 25 gates to the holy Mosque that lead to the Kaaba. As you pass through any gate you'll eventually reach the Kaaba.

After walking through the courtyard and passing the gates, you'll cross a large group of rugs that pointed to Kaaba where people pray and read the Quran. Once you pass those rugs you will reach to the Kaaba. Once you start seeing it for real you'll feel something special that words can't describe. It's a feeling of security and peace that I've never felt before and this hap-

pened only there. In addition, as you see Kaaba you'll notice people go around it in circles to perform a certain duty called "Tawaf". Kaaba is a cube-shaped building that is made of garnet stones. The entrance of the Kaaba is above the ground and the door is made of silver. At the corner of the Kaaba there is a stone called the "Black Stone". This stone is where Muslims start performing the "Tawaf". There is also a white gutter all around the Kaaba to protect the foundation of it. Finally, Kaaba is covered with a black silk with golden curtain to protect it and this curtain is called "Kiswah", which is replaced annually.

In conclusion, Kaaba is the iconic symbol of Islam and it's the destination of all Muslims around the world. This spiritual place is for performing special and regular duties for Muslims. As I mentioned before, Kaaba is the place where Muslims turn at during prayers. Furthermore, it's exceptional for Muslims around the world.

2nd Place: Should Soccer Players Salaries Be Capped?

Ahmed Almansour

Soccer is considered the most famous sport around the world. It has so many fans that follow this kind of sport. In my country, Saudi Arabia, soccer is the most popular sport and always its news hits the headlines. Many people are passionate about soccer's contests and support their teams enthusiastically. Rich people who can support their teams by doling money always lose millions to make the fans happy, and the fans appreciate rich people for their support. However, as in other countries, there are strong teams which always compete to the end of the contest, and weak teams which try to stay in the limelight. Strong teams, to maintain their importance and publicity, attract skillful players from other teams. Currently, to bring a talented player who can make the difference on the field is very expensive. The small teams exploit strong team's needs to buy player's contracts and make the price higher and higher. This kind of exploitation dooms the purpose

of sport; players have become more materialistic due to the fact that they are being overpaid and the teams cause disparity between the standard of living in society and the players.

The purpose of sport is for fun, and the highest limit is the entertainment, not to make enemies. If a player emerges from modest teams, the strong teams start negotiating with his team to take advantage of his skills by buying or hiring his contract. As a result, the competition comes outside the field and media increase the problem by drawing fans into the deal. Five years ago, a famous player transferred to the strongest team in Asia; during the negotiations, many teams wanted his services and when they failed, the player became despised by the loser team's fans. The problem was a small team wanted money by raising its player's contract cost not to make fans enjoy soccer inside the field.

Because of the high pay, players play soccer not to enjoy practicing the most famous sport in the world, they play soccer to make money. Money is important to make future more secure for the players, but connecting showing their talents with money is unfair.

They earn millions per year even without contributing to society's affairs, such as supporting charities or disabled people. Furthermore, when society waits from them to be excellent role-models for their generation, they show off through eccentric habits, such as hair styles or even their behavior when they play during the competition. Sometimes, audiences feel that those players do not deserve these huge contracts. Also, most players are not educated and it is rare to find a player who has a high education. So, the society has the right to criticize what the players earn versus what they give to their society.

The reasons which make the audience oppose and criticize their huge contracts do not just affect the competition. They affect the teams to bring money to the negotiating table. They take out loans to make their fans satisfied with their team's progression. Consequently, they always encounter financial deficit to pay their debts. Some teams go into bankruptcy, but for what? For a ball game! Also, they create disparity between society's living levels by paying much more for the players and ignoring support other aspects of creativity such as innovation or

invention. Many people demand to change the way that they play just for fame. The problem seems complicated to solve but on the horizon emerges a solution that could have changed high rising contracts cost. The solution is educating the sport's community about the pitfalls of the critical situation which could affect this beautiful sport in the close future, such as the lack of money resources.

To sum up, soccer is the preferred sport for many society's levels in my country. We all know that teams pay a lot of money to make us more loyal to our teams which represent our districts. To help each other develop our favorite sport, athletic experts suggest that improving teams can come by an excellent management. The teams should keep the contest on the field and build their team wisely. Moreover, the players know that their value on the field will not last long, so they must not ask for more money without any convincing result on the field. Finally, an economic observer who warned the sport's community said, to make the competition between society's levels fair they must stop wasting money by paying so much more money to soccer's players more than other careers and make a limit for player's contracts or the teams will face a difficult future to cover player's salaries.

Notes on Architecture

Alix Kabre

Architecture includes a very varied kind of skills in art, mathematics, environment, and so on, which architects use to express their creativity on buildings. The more a feature gets old the more it interests people. That is why people are focused on different types of architecture. It is a fact that every culture is described by its particularities of constructions and behavior. According to those cultures we have a couple of architecture styles. But I want to share some information about Egyptian, Greek and Roman architectures.

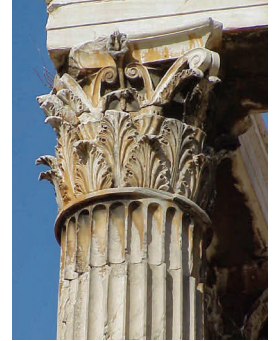
First, one of the oldest and most influential civilization architecture systems is the Egyptian one, the pyramids. It has determined a lot of things. Before building them there were a lot of details that needed to be respected. The position and the shape of pyramids were made by some religious beliefs. Landscape is very important for Egyptians because pyramid has been shaped to seem like a mountain, the smooth sides symbolized the rays of the sun; these characteristics were believed to help the king's soul to ascend to heaven and join the gods. This shape also has significance that is strength; a pyramid must be impressive for people and others pharaohs. To make this work, architects need some technics, geometry rules. Among those rules, the most important was *Canon* law based on proportions laws, square modules: arithmetic proportion. Also, the principal element of construction was stone, that make the quality highly formulized. Why stone? Because it was easy to find and that were the materials that Egyptians used for their temples and tombs. Constructors were slaves and low society. They had a few time to do pyramids that makes them work without stopping. Pharaoh did this to not let them time for organizing a rebellion. Egyptian and Greek architecture have some similarities.

Second, when we talk about Ancient Greece, we understand Zeus, temples and images of Athens. Ancient Greek architecture is

influenced by a lot of styles. But its similarities with Egyptian architecture come from its relationships with Egypt. They used Egyptian style but in a deeper way. As an example, their work was anthropomorphic, it could be seen on vases. Geometry rules are based on *Golden Rectangle*, geometric proportions. Most of their temples and monuments were composed of columns. The *orders* is the system that describe their houses and temples, ratio and diameters. About their construction of column, which support temples, the diameter, the ratio, and the space between different columns. The diameter, from the bottom to the top, vary, in getting bigger and bigger, for all (*orders*) types of columns, Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns. Greek geometry was connected with their philosophy. Most of their building were particular not for the shape of the building but their art, their status. The main materials were stone or mud bricks as Egyptians. Constructors were slaves and the low society. This architecture responds to their challenges with passion of beauty and mathematical systems. That makes its difference.

Third, Ancient Roman innovations as Roman Arches, Concrete and Aqueducts are one of the main features that built this big empire. As any other culture, Ancient Roman architecture is a mix of cultures. It has a connection with Egyptian and Greek architecture. Romans were seen through the, *the She-Wolf* by which Romulus and Remus founders of Roma were suckled. Their construction base was a geometric diagram called *Roma Quadrata*. The *She-Wolf* inspired *Roma Quadrata* as a hybrid because of some of its sources from Greek culture. It is similar to Chinese past representation of village and Greek, Egyptian, Icelandic presentation of cities. This diagram presents the plan of the town divided by two axes, *Cardo* from West to East and *Decumanus* from North to South; that intersection is called Forum. This kind of diagram has a link with crucifixion, execution in Rome, which was a way of punishment for criminals. In their houses, *Atrium* houses, they were focused on the

center, the courtyard or atrium. Roman architecture is believed to have some religious characteristics. Every temple had at least one altar for one god. The basic element of construction were concrete and stone that are available everywhere. From the middle to the perimeter of most of their constructions, materials were less and less hard. All that presents some



characteristics of Ancient Roman architecture.

Architecture, a kind of art expression, changes from a culture to another one. This helps to explain some kind of architecture styles as Egyptian, Greek and Roman. By their techniques, their geometry rules, their religious beliefs, they marked the old world and still impress people today. From learning about those types of architectures styles, nowadays, architecture can be improved, developed. By developing our architectural aspects in every country we make some differences and that is a good point for the notoriety of the country also for the economy.

“Sometimes when we act with kindness, people think that we are weak. Therefore, we become mean just as a defense mechanism”

A poem by Khawlah AlAnsari

My Purpose

Anwer Al-Kaimakchi

When I began my undergraduate study, I had the opportunity to be exposed to the full range of engineering courses, all of which tended to reinforce and solidify my intense interest in engineering. However, I always had the feeling that there is still much ahead of me to learn. My interest in structural engineering dates back to my years of high school, where I excelled in physics, chemistry, and math. Furthermore, I had always been fascinated by the intellectual and technical challenges of turning the most intricate architectural plans into real life structures. Nowadays, this field of engineering became an essential field of study, as it establishes the backbone of the infrastructure in a country such as Iraq.

Today, I want to be part of that reconstruction program and to use the knowledge and the skills that I shall gain to benefit my country and society. So far I have earned a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering department at Al-Nahrain University in Baghdad with a high level of academic success. From the start of my study, I tried to prove to not only myself, but also to my colleagues that I wanted to be an excellent engineer. I was fortunate to have the full support of my professors throughout my study and even after graduation. During my study, I had the chance to visit

several construction projects as a part of my study requirements. This helped me to interpret the drawings into real construction projects. I am very interested in beginning my postgraduate studies to get a master degree from a prestigious US university. In fact, this had been my ambition since I was a child, and grew up with me during my undergraduate study. I have always been determined to reach my goals no matter what the obstacles are. I believe that by completing a Master program at your university, I shall develop my perspectives, both in and outside my field of study. Those perspectives will give me a clear idea about the challenges facing my own country and possible improvements that I can make.

In summary, I would like to become a professional structural engineer. It is my desire that by studying hard and practicing more, I will be able to design/analysis such structures in the future. I would also like to take advantage of the knowledge that I shall gain to help me fulfilling my ambition not only in developing and reconstructing my country, but also developing the abilities of students at university-level institutions to raise their scientific level and help them to achieve their goals. I want to be a good role model for them, and I think this is the least I can do to serve my country.

Childhood

Satomi Amano

When I was four years old, I started to play the piano. During my lessons, my teacher played the piano for me. The sounds of the piano were very beautiful. I admired my teacher because I couldn't play the piano like her. I asked her how to play the beautiful sounds of the piano. She gave me some advice. I realized that the touch of my fingers was not good for sounds. My fingers made bad sounds. I took my teacher's advice, and then I practiced to make the beautiful sounds. I can play the beautiful sounds of the piano now. The piano belongs to me.

Do Sports Make our lives better?

Daehwan Kim

Sports have been global phenomena due to its ripple effect in economy, politics, society, and culture. However, some people do not enjoy sports or they are not interested in them. Nevertheless, having a favorite sport would play a pivotal role in people's lives in the modern society for several reasons. In other words, people can make their lives better by having a favorite sport due to its positive effects in physical health, psychological health, and social need fulfillment.

First of all, participation in a sport such as basketball, soccer, and swimming has a positive influence on physical health. A lot of pieces of literature have proved that participation in sports containing physical activity improves physical health and prevents adult diseases. For instance, according to a research, people who swim for an hour three days every week showed a significant reduce in fat and increase in muscle when they were compared with the control group (e.g., do not participation in sports). Additionally, the study

reported that increased muscle enhanced the metabolic ability of a body. Ultimately, exceptional metabolic ability enhanced by the increase in muscle was found to prevent obesity which is the most critical cause of adult diseases.

Second, people can keep their positive emotions and psychological state by enjoying a sport. To be more specific, sports have been found to have a positive impact on psychological states by fulfilling hedonic needs (e.g., pleasure, excitement, joy, and so on) and edaimonic needs (e.g., self-actualization, pride, confidence). For example, people who regularly participate in a specific sport tend to feel excitement and pleasure when their goal and skills are matched in the sport. Additionally, those people who overcome their weakness in sports are likely to feel sense of self-actualization and pride. For example, according to a research, participants in the Paralympics showed higher self-actualization and pride by overcoming their disability in sports.

Lastly, sport is one of the best vehicles to satisfy people's social needs. Specifically, sports

provide an optimal place where people can meet each other, interact, and communicate with respect to sports of interest. In addition, people can feel sense of belongingness by being a sports fan (e.g., specific sport, athlete, sport team, and so on). According to a research, the more people participate in sports (both participation in and spectating), the more opportunities they have to interact each other thereby reducing sense of isolation which leads to sense of belongingness to the society. Another example is that most FSU students have strong sense of belongingness to the university due to their attachment to the school sports teams such as football, soccer, volleyball, tennis, and so forth according to a research project.

To sum up, having a favorite sport enables people live better by enhancing physical health, having a positive impact on psychological state, and fulfilling social needs. Thus, people should have their own favorite sports in order to make their lives better.



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The Center for Intensive English Studies is an Intensive English Program located in the heart of campus at Florida State University. Our students come from all over the globe to enroll in robust and challenging seven-week English sessions.

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Andrew Wilson**

Our Neighbor, the Claude Pepper Center **Alix Kabre**

The CLAUDE PEPPER CENTER is an institute created for lifelong education, and it is a museum. It is one of the buildings of Florida State University, near the Center for Intensive English Studies. In front the building, there is a circular driveway and a statue of Claude Pepper. The center is impressive. Like a palace, by its characteristics, its walls are made of bricks and its entry of glass. After passing through the entry, you have an enlightened hall by rays of sunshine at morning and lights at noon. On the left side of the hall, you can see Lincoln's car. On the right side, there are some tables covered with white tablecloths and chairs around them. Go straight through the door facing the entry and you can see a museum about Claude Pepper, his life. This room is less enlightened with its colors dark green and blue, typical to 1950s. When you arrive there, you can see first a presentation of his house behind this, his black car. At your left, a presentation of his work stuff, his office, his historical fight main points, like his meeting with the president John F. Ken-

edy. At your right, there is a room with paper news of this period; on the other side of this room, there is another room where people can follow their lifelong education. Across the museum, there is a reading room with a lot of lights, tables and chairs.

All of its particularity makes this building comfortable for the lifelong learning program and for other students.

