

ISSUE 1 – 1ST MARCH 2025

# OSA INSIGHT

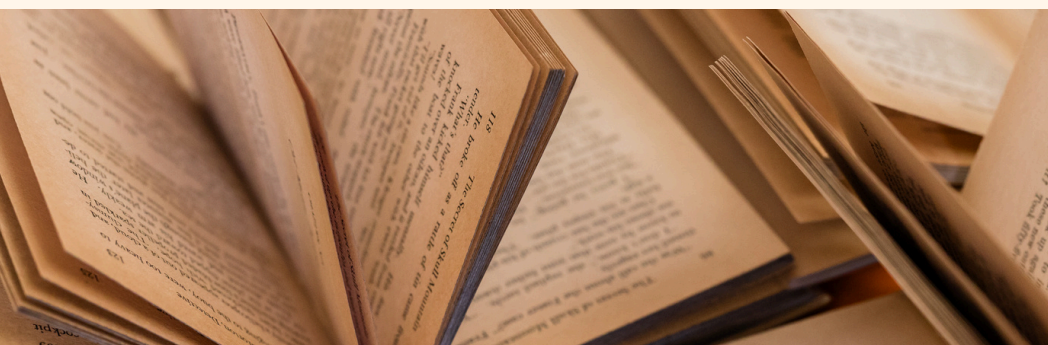
Student Newspaper



## World Book Day

BY HENRY GOWER

World Book Day is nearly here, and it's the perfect chance to dive into a brand-new adventure. Whether you're into solving mysteries, exploring futuristic worlds, or following quirky heroes, there's a book out there for you! Reading isn't just a boring pastime, it's an important tool for personal growth. Each time you open a book, you head on a journey that sharpens your mind and helps you unwind. Whether you're losing yourself in the worlds of the Faraway Tree or exploring the halls of Hogwarts, reading builds your vocabulary, boosts concentration, and even helps to reduce stress. Beyond the joy of a story, books open doors to enhanced understanding and creativity. They let you step into different lives and cultures, sparking empathy and paving the way to fresh ideas. New narratives can challenge you to think critically and see the world through new lenses. So this World Book Day, why not give yourself the gift of a good book? Step through the gateway to unforgettable adventures and new ways of thinking. And if you're inspired, share your passion with us—write an article about your favourite character, book, or setting, and email your piece to [19HGower@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:19HGower@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk) or [19DDupret@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:19DDupret@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk) and the best ones will be featured in next month's issue along with an interview of an author! Happy reading, and I can't wait to see where your stories take you!



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# The fun theory: Volkswagen's innovative approach to behaviour change

BY MARIAM Y12

In an interesting approach to marketing, Volkswagen has introduced its Fun Theory campaign, which aimed to promote positive behaviour through fun experiences. Launched in 2009, the campaign highlights the idea that making activities enjoyable can lead to better choices in everyday life.

One of the most famous examples from the Fun Theory campaign is the Piano Staircase project in Stockholm, Sweden. In this experiment, Volkswagen transformed a large set of stairs near subway station into a giant piano where each step produced a musical note. The results showed that the interactive staircase persuaded 66% more people than normal chose to use the staircase instead of the escalator. Showing how a playful twist can encourage healthier choices.

The theory was that people would take the stairs more often instead of the escalator or elevator by making the staircase “fun.” The hypothesis was that by making a staircase more fun to do, people would stop using easier ways of transportation, such as escalators. By promoting the use of stairs, we could eventually improve the health of others by promoting an active lifestyle and a good well-being.

Another successful Initiative was the world's deepest been , Which was designed to encourage littering awareness. By creating a fun and engaging way dispose of rubbish. Volkswagen aimed to change people's behaviour towards littering. The deep been Produced a satisfying sound as it was thrown in which enticed pass buyers to participate. This cleverly highlighted the effectiveness of incorporate enjoyment into social life. The goal with these fun theories is to promote Volkswagen’s new environmentally friendly BlueMotionTechnologies brand responsibility.

Most waggons fan theory campaign received widespread. Acclaim for its creativity and effectiveness, demonstrating that the marketing can transcend traditional boundaries by focusing on fun, Volkswagen not only promoted its brand of their economically friendly cars. Both inspire people to make better choices in their lives. Hence - If something is fun. People are more likely to participate and change their habits for the better.



## promoting positive behaviour through fun experiences



# The TikTok Ban

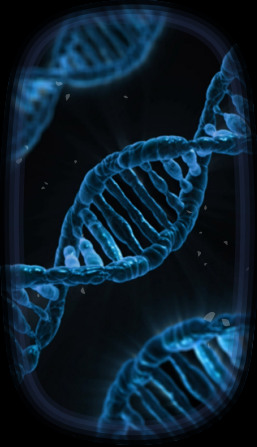
BY RAYYA YR 12

The TikTok ban began in August 2020 when President Donald Trump signed an order stating that TikTok transactions will be banned in 45 days if ByteDance did not sell the app, which although it was revoked by President Joe Biden in June 2021, Biden signed a bill demanding that ByteDance sell TikTok to a US-approved buyer within nine months or face a total ban of the app within the US in March 2024. On January 19th, 2025, TikTok goes dark, but roughly 12 hours later is reinstated and on his first day in office Donald Trump delays the ban for 75 days. The man who first started the ban is now painted as the hero for the app's reinstatement.

But what does this ban mean? First, many have argued that the TikTok ban, or the ban of any apps go against the values that America is built on when it comes to free speech. The banning or censorship of apps is limiting Americans' right to free speech and expression, which although this does not always end well, this ban and Trump's re-election can only signal the rise of fascism, not progression. Additionally, the reasons behind the ban are far from noble, although the US government claim the ban is necessary for the protection of national security, there is no evidence for this, despite many lawmakers' worries. There is a distinct possibility that this is an excuse designed to cloud the fact that the real reason for the ban is nothing more than a superpower rivalry between the US and China.

In conclusion, nothing good can come from this ban and it is much more than an attempt to protect national security, it is a signal of huge change, but not for the better.

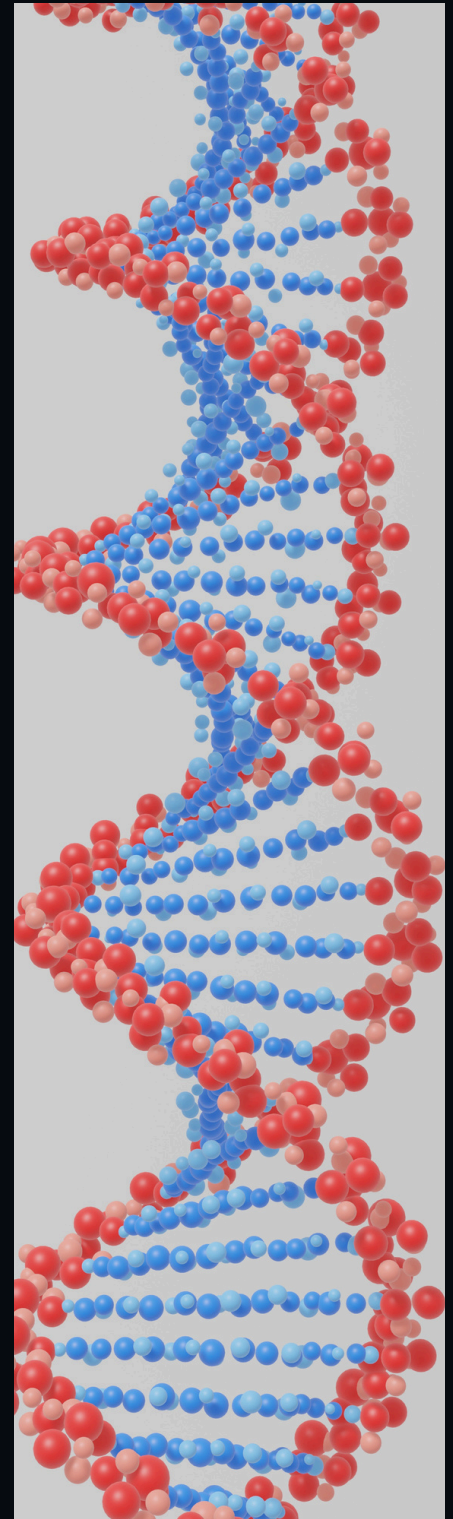




# Rosalind Franklin - The First Lady of DNA

BY DIANE Y12

Franklin began her scientific journey by obtaining a degree in natural sciences at the university of Cambridge and quickly applied her skills in mathematics and physical chemistry to the scientific world. Her most well-known quest was and remains the exploration of DNA. Franklin became an expert in X-ray crystallography which pushed her to use her skills in X-ray diffraction to develop the renown 'photo 51' in 1952 which captured the molecular pattern of DNA -famously known as the 'double helix'. Additionally, Franklin also made other impactful contributions to her field- such as discovering that the tobacco mosaic virus's RNA presented itself in a single-stranded helix. Her efforts helped lay the building blocks for the modern understanding of virology and genetics. Additionally, during the war, she became a part of the 'British Coal Utilisation Research Association' and worked on studying the structure of carbon and coal. Her work on coal's molecular structure helped develop its use as an energy source which contributed to the war effort. In 1962, Wilkins, Crick and Watson were awarded 'The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine' for their discovery of the molecular structure of DNA. Before 1972, only living candidates could have been selected to receive a Nobel prize. Unfortunately, Franklin passed away in 1958 due to cancer which not only prevented her from being able to be selected as a Nobel nominee but also led to her efforts becoming underappreciated and neglected for decades after- arguably still to this day. Watson and Crick's paper on 'Molecular Structure of Nucleic Acids: A Structure of Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid' published in 1953 did not give Franklin her well-deserved credit for her contributions. This raises questions about the recognition within science and what this symbolises- would Franklin have won the Nobel if her discovery had been made in 2025? Would Franklin even of had a microscopic chance of winning the Nobel had she been alive in 1962? What does this say about the acknowledgment of female scientists across the period of scientific advancement? Still- even though Franklin never won the Nobel she remains a pillar in science. There are many adjectives that could be used to describe a scientist like Rosalind Franklin -starting with innovative, courageous, resilient, and intelligent... my personal favourite would be revolutionary. If there is one thing to retain about Franklin- it is her achievements. In a world of science, I encourage anyone who is passionate about the subject to embrace their inner Rosalind Franklin and live up to her words: 'science and everyday life cannot and should not be separated. Science, for me, gives a partial explanation of life. In so far as it goes, it is based on fact, experience and experiment.'



# Composer of the Month: Francis Poulenc

BY CARA Y12



Poulenc was a French, classical composer writing in the 20th Century. His compositions include songs, solo piano works, chamber music, choral pieces, operas, ballets and orchestral concert music such as symphonies. Known for his high spirits and creativity, Poulenc diverged from the family tradition of working in the manufacturing industry, instead touring Europe and America as a pianist and composer. As well as his extreme talents, Poulenc was the first musician to record and play his compositions through a gramophone. He attributed his gift to the toy piano he was given as a child, which he described as “white with pink cherries”. As a gay man, Poulenc struggled with his sexuality, perhaps demonstrated in the turbulent and highly expressive nature of his music. Many of his songs were written for musician Pierre Bernac, with whom he considered marriage despite its illegality at the time. After his friend Pierre-Octave Ferroud was killed in a horrific road accident, Poulenc returned to Catholicism in order to sustain the hope he had left, which inspired a sequence of profoundly beautiful religious works which are often overlooked in today’s society.

Listening recommendation: Poulenc’s Oboe Sonata

If you have any suggestions of composers or musical artists for next month’s edition, please email [19cgarrow@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:19cgarrow@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk)



# This Month In History

BY CORDELIA AND RUTH Y12

Welcome to This Month in History, where we cover historical events that happened each month. From famous births to groundbreaking discoveries, we'll explore what made March unforgettable!

## Deaths

While some brilliant minds came into existence in Marches across history, many also died. These include:

15th March 44 BC - Roman emperor Julius Caesar was stabbed to death 23 times by his own senators because they worried he was going to become a king and be too powerful. His own friend (and possibly son) Brutus led the assassination! Et tu, Brute?

31st March 1855 - Charlotte Brontë, Victorian author of famous novels like Jane Eyre, died from morning sickness at the young age of 38. However, something many don't know about her is that she had literal night vision, able to read perfectly in the dark, yet couldn't in the light due to her shortsightedness!

## Births

6th March 1475 - Michelangelo, sculptor of arguably the most famous statue in the world, 'David', was born. He was also a painter, architect, poet and forger!

30th March 1853 - Vincent Van Gogh's life began, one of history's most influential artists. His works include 'The Starry Night' and 'Vase With Fifteen Sunflowers', but tragically he was unknown during his lifetime, only ever selling one painting.

14th March 1879 - Einstein, the man behind the theory of relativity, came into the world. He won a Nobel Prize for his revolutionary discoveries in physics, quantum mechanics and gravity!

## Firsts

7th March 1876 - Inventor Alexander Graham Bell patented the world's first telephone, and made the first phone call 3 days later. It was to his assistant, just saying "Mr Watson, come here. I want to see you."

8th March 1911 - The first International Women's Day took place! It has happened every year since, and the signature colours are purple (representing justice) and green (representing hope).

13th March 2014 - While this may not be considered history by some, it certainly is a historic moment. Same-sex marriage was legalised in the UK on this date, with the first couples getting married on the 29th, marking a huge milestone in queer history.

## Events

19th March 1834 - Six farm workers tried to form a trade union, but were deported to Australia as punishment on this day. Now immortalised as the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs', their bravery in standing up to tyrannical landowners helped lead the workers' rights movement - and should hopefully be familiar to GCSE historians...

-> Fun fact: our very own writer at This Month in History (Cordelia) is related to two of the martyrs: George and James Loveless!

28th March 1912 - Many of you will likely know about the annual Oxford vs Cambridge varsity boat race, but the one in 1912 was a disaster, with both boats sinking due to bad weather! Despite not being on the same calibre as other events in this issue, varsity matches are an important part of Oxford's cultural identity and it's important to learn and value the history of our city.

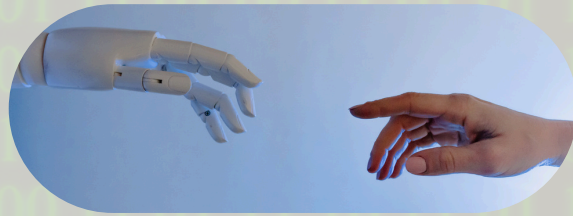
1st March 1974 - 7 government officials in America were accused of obstruction of justice in the Watergate scandal. This was a pivotal moment in presidential history, as Nixon had covered up a break-in to Democrat headquarters to find out their secrets and get him re-elected. It made many not trust the government or even want no government at all!

And that's it! Stay tuned for next month, when we'll be exploring exciting Aprils across history. However, it's impossible for us to summarise every event, so if you discover something interesting, why not send it in? You might just see your contribution in next month's article!

To do so, email either [19rconmy@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:19rconmy@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk) or [19cscottermainprize@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:19cscottermainprize@oxfordspires.anthemtrust.uk).

# DeepSeek, Deepfakes, and the Dangers of Generative AI.

BY PHILIPPA YR 12



Since a Chinese start-up released the latest version of DeepSeek, in January, it has raised many questions about the status of existing AIs and drawn attention to the flaws in such models. But why? Is DeepSeek better or worse than prevalent AI right now? How should AI be controlled?

So far, the United States has been leading in the ever-growing generative AI market, pushing out numerous chatbots, such as ChatGPT. However, companies like OpenAI have been doing this at the cost of \$100 million, or around £79,000,000 and at great environmental cost. However, DeepSeek only cost around £5 million, and managed to utilise less advanced technology to create a more efficient system, that even uses less energy than its competitors - all of this accumulating into a better, cheaper AI.

This has had a larger economic impact as well. The reveal of DeepSeek's model created doubt amongst investors and supporters in AI development - after all, why invest millions into a tech company if they aren't the leading company in their industry? Not only that, but it embarrassed and scared American companies and the Western world. Countries, such as Australia and Italy, have imposed restrictions on the app, whether by disabling it on government devices or implementing a complete ban, respectively. Newly inducted President Trump, who is heavily involved with technological giants, such as Elon Musk, described DeepSeek as a "wake-up call". Furthermore, if such technological wins continue to occur in China - in a situation where the United States does not 'wake up' - it will create an even greater reliance on Chinese markets and manufacturing, with a ripple effect on international relations.

However, since it was released, many have been trying to undermine DeepSeek. For example, BBC investigators attempted to ask DeepSeek questions that would disagree with government censorship, which the AI abided by. This raises questions on AI regulations. To what extent should AI be censored?

As generative AI has become more prevalent, and as such, more accurate, it has resulted in its use in many grey areas, with laws to protect people yet to be set up. For example, during the 2024 US election, Republican candidate, Donald Trump, generated fake images of Taylor Swift and her fans endorsing him, in an attempt to sway her international fanbase. Should politicians be allowed to use AI to falsely advertise their campaigns? This is an especially dangerous case, as political elections typically have a huge impact on a national and international scale. If politicians begin feeding voters misinformation, and nothing legally requires them to stop, the consequences could be disastrous. Another example is worrying on both a personal scale and an international scale: deepfake sexual abuse. As AI images become more realistic, an underground industry that turns pictures of women and girls into nudes has arisen. Conservative Life Peer, Charlotte Owens, describes deepfake abuse as a "new frontier of violence against women", and indeed it fits with a rise in far-right beliefs, including misogynistic values, amongst younger populations. While it is illegal to share deepfakes, even the creation of them is a violation to the mostly oblivious women they are of, and once created, nothing prevents these images from being hacked and stolen, and then distributed, as they have been in many cases. It is clear that governmental restrictions are, therefore, entirely necessary, and that AI should not be allowed to 'run amok', as it has up until this point.



AI, in spite of all this, has not stopped at realistic images. AI can now be used to create artwork, essays, and pieces of writing about anything already created. Instead of learning and perfecting artistic talent, you can now generate poems, paintings, and pictures with a simple sentence! All of this, off the backs of artists. AI, like Grok, trains itself off of pre-existing artwork that has been made available on the internet, without the consent of the people who originally created these pieces after years of hard work. The Arts are already a dying industry, on a steady decline since the Industrial Revolution, as technological advancements force artisans out of work, so that machines can make poor quality products for less money. How is it fair that artists starve and live in poverty just because they want to enjoy their work? And why should this mean that technological supergiants should be allowed to steal their work and make a profit from other people generating images based off of them?

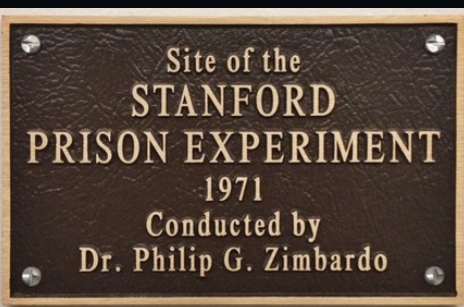
It is clear that simple ethics and reason is not enough to persuade AI companies, investors and users, however. So putting the moral argument aside, it is easy to discover the truly monumental impact AI has on the environment. The UN Environmental Programme has reported that the data centres housing AI servers are some of the largest consumers of water in the world - despite water becoming a resource growing rapidly more scarce. In 2024, AI globally was already on track to use six times the amount of water as Denmark. These data centres also use an unimaginable amount of electricity; a search on ChatGPT requires 10 times the amount of electricity needed for a Google Search. And finally, they rely on minerals and rare elements, mined unethically, mostly in third world countries. As suggested by theorists, like A.G. Frank, his Dependency Theory, and the likes of Karl Marx, Capitalism requires the exploration of the proletariat. On the global stage, rich superpowers play the role of the bourgeoisie, and their unrelenting mining in countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, has led to the displacement of thousands, violating their human rights to housing and freedom from violence. The multinational corporations and authorities who benefit from these mining operations do so in violation with international law.

The use of generative AI may save you a minute, when you choose to search for an answer on ChatGPT instead of browsing Google. It may save you half an hour of your time, when you use it instead of writing an essay. It may save you six months, when you generate a drawing instead of practicing art. But these actions are fatal for people now, and yourself in the long run. It is a choice between a minute, and people's right to safety being undermined because of mining occupations. It is a choice between half an hour, and people's deaths at the hands of water scarcity because of data servers. It is a choice between six months, and people's existence in poverty because of thieving companies.





He unfortunately didn't pay enough regard to the ethical issues



# The Stanford Prison Experiment

BY SOPHIA AND MILA Y12

The controversial yet infamous Stanford prison experiment was a study conducted by Philip Zimbardo in 1971 influenced by the question: Is the brutality in prisons better elucidated through a dispositional explanation or a situational explanation?

Zimbardo conducted an experiment at Stanford with 21 student volunteers, ensuring they had no prior physical or mental health issues. Participants were randomly assigned as prisoners or guards by a coin flip. Prisoners underwent fingerprinting, strip searches, and were given numbers to simulate a real prison environment. While Zimbardo had accounted for various issues regarding internal validity, he unfortunately didn't pay enough regard to the ethical issues that were inevitably going to arise as the study progressed.

The first day of the experiment saw the arrest of the "prisoners" who were brought down into the makeshift prison that was nicknamed "The Yard". Various rooms along the corridor had been stripped of their doors and replaced with bars to serve as cells, further along the corridor was a closet that was used as the solitary confinement and given the name: "The Hole". Despite being conducted in the basement of an Ivy league university, the treatment and conditions the "prisoners" were already experiencing showed how the 'Guards' authority had been tainted by day one. On the second day, the "prisoners" had already decided to rebel however they were deterred through the guards' use of psychological warfare and physical abuse. As the days progressed, the guards became more and more viscous towards the prisoners who became resentful of Zimbardo who played the role of the prison warden and seemingly neglected the protection of the inmates and the psychological harm that was imposed on them. On day 5, members of the public showed increased concern towards the experiment, and the lack of consent from the prisoners who were unaware of the dehumanizing nature of study they had volunteered to be a part of. The experiment that was supposed to last two weeks concluded after a short but eventful 6 days due to the pleas of Zimbardo's girlfriend.

Zimbardo found that the strength of conformity to social roles appeared to be extremely high, but are these results reliable due to the nature and length of the study, or more arguably even worth the lengths of unethical and immoral treatment the guards conformed to? To this day psychologists question if the nature of this experiment justifies the conclusion, due to the number of unethical elements, such as the right for participants to withdrawal and the psychological damage. Additionally, after further investigation of the results and methods, it was found that Zimbardo had exaggerated his results as only 1/3 of the guard had conformed to social roles and demonstrated abuse towards the prisoners while the other 2/3 remained fair or even tried to help the prisoners.

# Up learn- A Brutally Honest Review

BY ALEC Y12



In today's highly competitive academic environment, students are continually seeking effective methods to optimize their learning and achieve academic excellence. Up Learn is an advanced online educational platform that was introduced to us earlier this year. It asserts its ability to help A-Level students attain the highest grades through a research-driven approach. By integrating principles of cognitive science, artificial intelligence, and interactive learning methodologies, Up Learn endeavours to enhance both the efficiency and engagement of the learning process. However, the key question remains - does it fulfil its promises?

Up Learn confidently highlights its remarkable success rate, with 97% of students reportedly achieving an A\* or A grade at A-Level. This remarkable level of achievement suggests that the platform's unique learning methods are extremely effective. The use of artificial intelligence allows for a personalized learning experience, identifying individual weaknesses and adapting study sessions to ensure maximum efficiency. The incorporation of active recall and spaced repetition techniques helps to 'refresh knowledge', making it easier for students to retain and recall information to further solidify their understanding of a topic. Most significantly, Up Learn's engaging video lessons are meticulously designed to break down complex topics into easily digestible explanations, making learning more accessible and enjoyable. With its focus on independent learning, Up Learn is an excellent resource for students who prefer to study at their own pace while still following a structured and results-driven program.

Now, as with everything we use, Up Learn has its flaws too. Many users find that the seemingly useful videos can feel rather tedious to watch, with narrators rambling on and on about inconsequential topics, such as measuring the height of the legendary basketball player LeBron James. Up Learn also fails to always provide a user-friendly experience. Its questions, while relatively simple, can be rather frustrating to complete, as questions are occasionally marked incorrectly even when the user has provided a sufficient answer. Some users may also find the emphasis on independent learning to be a disadvantage, particularly those who prefer structured guidance from a teacher or tutor. For users who struggle with self-motivation or require external accountability, the lack of interactive classroom elements or live instruction may hinder their progress. While the platform offers structured courses and progress tracking, it does not replicate the dynamic, real-time engagement found in traditional classrooms or tutoring sessions.

To get the best results from Up Learn, it is crucial to engage consistently with the material. The platform is most effective for independent learners who can stay motivated and make use of features like AI-powered adaptive learning, active recall, and spaced repetition. However, students who struggle with self-discipline or prefer direct teacher interaction may need to supplement their studies with additional resources. While Up Learn provides a strong foundation for mastering A-Level content, success ultimately depends on how consistently it is used.