

The Blue & White

Congrats Class of 2024!



Memorial Day Parade

by Kaylie Lam

On Monday, May 27th, the town of Methuen put on the annual Memorial Day Parade. The parade started at 10:00 AM and ended around 11:30 AM, and started and ended on Broadway.

During the parade, stops were made on Charles Street for a quick ceremony celebrating a WWII Monument and at the Walnut Grove Cemetery to honor the lives of the people who served the military.

Methuen High School's JROTC and Ranger Band participated in the Memorial Day Parade. The JROTC marched while holding

the American and State flags and the Ranger Band followed, playing a variety of service songs.

On Charles Street, the parade stopped in front of a WWII Monument and brief speeches were given. Then, the Ranger Band performed the song, *Navy Hymn*. After this performance, the parade reformed and continued marching down Charles Street.

Finally, the parade stopped at the Walnut Grove Cemetery. Speeches were given by members of the community about Memorial Day and the people who gave their lives to protect the safety of our community.

After the speeches, the Ranger Band performed the *Star Spangled Banner*. With that performance complete, the parade marched back to where it began, concluding the parade.



2024 Election Results for Student Council	
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What Makes A Sport?

by Chloe Cochrane

Think of a sport.

Did you think of football, soccer, baseball, basketball, or hockey?

Chances are, your answer is yes. The title ‘sport’ is typically given to traditional athletic activities--say, basketball. This makes sense; however, there is heated debate on what should be considered a sport and what shouldn’t be.

“It has to have a ball.” “It should require strenuous effort.” There are many arguments against counting less orthodox sports to be sports. An example of this is dance. Many people argue that dance isn’t a sport because it doesn’t involve the same kind of physical effort, but it is a sport. It does require physical effort, as well as dedication and talent. It also involves competition.

Now that you see the debate, understand that the textbook definition of a sport is this: “*A game, competition, or activity requiring physical effort and skill.*” When you play a game of chess, odds are that you probably don’t think anything along the lines of “this is my favorite sport.” However, chess is— by the textbook definition— a sport. So why do people argue that chess and activities like chess aren’t sports?

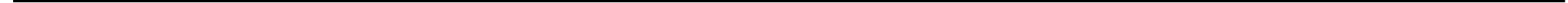
The most common contention is that for an activity to be a sport, it needs to involve athletic activity— movement and rigorous

effort— something that will leave you out of breath to play. It’s unfair to say this. Activities like chess also require physical effort. They are challenging mentally and require intelligence and cerebral activity. Golf, which some people argue is just a “recreational activity” requires great focus and skill. The basis for what is a sport is competition and effort.

Another common line is “saying that ____ is a sport puts down real sports.” Putting two activities in the same category does not mean you are saying that they are the same thing or that they require the same amount of energy. Imagine you were mid conversation and your friend said that gym and math were both school subjects— obviously— but then a peer cuts in with something like “Saying gym is a subject puts down real subjects like math.” Clearly, that was not the intent behind your friend’s statement. Gym and math are vastly different, but that doesn’t mean they can’t fit into the same category. They both meet the same criteria to be a school subject; you are learning something and applying your knowledge in school. Gym being challenging physically does not make math any less challenging mentally. It’s the same the other way around. Why can’t this apply for sports too?

You can argue that dance and basketball are scored differently when it comes to competition. This makes sense. Dance is scored by a panel of judges to decide the winner of a competition. However, you get points for your technique and how you carry out the choreography you are given. If you successfully complete your tricks and your turns, you’ll get more points. There are plenty of books out there that talk about dance moves and how to execute them, and books out there that talk about scoring— just like basketball rulebooks define what is a point and what isn’t.

Despite the evidence, there is always going to be people who maintain that certain activities don’t deserve the title of a sport because they aren’t as athletic. It’s up to you to educate yourself and decide: what is a sport?



Danzig V. Graves: Who’s the better vocalist?

by Sloan Farrell

Formed in 1977, the horror punk band, Misfits, had a number of band line-ups. The most controversial, though, was the lead singer switch.

The 1995 replacement for lead singer, Glenn Danzig, was Michale Graves, who was born only 2 years before the original band’s formation. Before joining, Graves had never heard of Misfits, despite it being one of the most influential bands in punk history.

The cult following of the Crimson Ghost tends to hold strong opinions towards Michale Graves but not necessarily for good reason. Graves’ Misfits is sometimes referred to as "the cosplay Misfits.”

The issues that fans have with the Michale Graves era of Misfits goes back to Danzig’s departure from the band on Halloween of 1983. After Danzig left to form his own band, Samhain, which later became known as simply “Danzig”, he sued for rights and royalties of Misfits. After a decade-long legal battle, another founding member of Misfits, bassist Jerry Only, won the rights to the band’s name for performances.

Within a year of the case’s end, Michale Graves joined Misfits, ironically on Halloween of 1995.

The addition of Graves felt ingenuine and, regardless of the band's talent, commercialized which led to a lot of disinterest from long-standing fans. However, the Michale Graves reboot of the

previously dormant Misfits did draw many new fans in and elevate Misfits to the status they now hold as a historical and influential punk rock band.

But after all this, does the work with Michale Graves deserve to be disregarded and seen as beneath the albums with Danzig? Although Graves lacked the eerie vocals possessed by Danzig, he carried the lyrics and structural design of the songs. With Graves, Misfits became a nationwide success instead of having a niche following of horror movie lovers and metalheads.

At that point, Danzig had his own successful band and Misfits wasn’t dependent on Danzig’s vocals for success.

The lineups over the course of Misfits' history have always been different but until the addition of Graves, the sound of Misfits had remained unchanged. The immense transformation of the band's style is clear on Graves’ tracks.

I’ve heard all the Misfits B-sides and hidden compilations and I can still admit I do like the Graves’ Misfits. I’d like to pick either Danzig or Graves as the better vocalist but they were too different to compare.

I truly feel like the Danzig Misfits and Graves Misfits were two seperate bands operating under the same name, much like Osborne’s and Dio’s Black Sabbath. While I appreciate both periods in Misfit’s history, it’s hard to say which is better.

I think the concept of choosing the ‘better band’ is unnecessary, and the music should be recognized for what it is and what it has done for punk rock. Grave’s vocals and lyrical talent was immense and elevated the band into the mainstream but he built off of Danzig’s initial ideas. The Misfits was Danzig’s baby and wouldn't exist without his ideas. Credit should be given to both vocalists and Misfits fans still debating this should enjoy the music for what it is.

Album Review: *Hit Me Hard and Soft*

by Janely Sanchez

Hit Me Hard and Soft is a Alternative pop and Electric goth album made by Billie Eilish O’Connell, who became famous at age thirteen when she released her song “Ocean Eyes”.

The album was released May 17, 2024, but announced on April 8th, 2024 that it was coming. The track listing is “Skinny”, “Lunch”, “Chihiro”, “Birds of a Feather”, “Wildflower”, “The Greatest”, “L’Amour de Ma Vie”, “The Diner”, “Bittersuite”, and “Blue”.

Her brother Finneas O’Connell helped her write and record in the basement of his Los Angeles residence, where they spent their time working with the songs. In December 2021, Eilish began to work with O’Connell on *Hit Me Hard and Soft*, which is her third studio album.

The Daily Telegraph and The Independent rated it five out of five stars, while Rolling Stone and The Guardian rated it four out of five stars. Helen Brown of The Independent said that the album "whispers its way through a marvelous maze of music to deliver some big emotional wallops." Neil McCormick from The Daily Telegraph said the same and added that it was a “heartbreak masterpiece” and that it was “rich, strange, smart, sad and wise enough” to be in comparison with Joni Mitchell’s “Blue (1971)”. Alexis Petridis from The Guardian spoke on its “beautiful” melodies and “distinctive” lyrics, but says a few of its elements could be “a little too opaque”.

Eilish previewed her songs “Lunch”, “L’Amour de Ma Vie”, and “Chihiro” at Coachella as a surprise, and on her debut day on Spotify got around 72 million streams.

“Lunch”, the lead single, gained extreme popularity and was globally named one of the best songs of the album, and currently has over 200 million streams. The three minute song is upbeat electro, synth-rock and synth-pop. The song's theme is about Eilish’s sexual orientation, and how she likes both men and women.

During an April 24, 2024 interview with Rolling Stone about the song, she stated, “That

song was actually part of what helped me become who I am, to be real. I wrote some of it before even doing anything with a girl, and then wrote the rest after. I’ve been in love with girls for my whole life, but I just didn’t understand.”

A couple of Eilish’s lyrics in this song makes a double entendre to animalistic and primordial instincts towards food, but also towards sexual attraction to women. She has lyrics like, “It’s a craving, not a crush.” which makes sure listeners don’t misinterpret the way she feels about this girl as a “girl crush”, where it’s a platonic relationship and she wants to be friends, but Eilish makes sure that it’s clear that she wants more than that.

“L’Amour de Ma Vie”, translated to “Love of My Life”, is a breakup song with two parts. It begins as a jazz and soft rock tune with a singing style similar to Icelandic singer and songwriter Laufey, then transitions to club beats, 1980s synths and Auto-Tuned vocals. The first part of the song focuses on Eilish speaking to her former partner, wishing the best for them and saying that she lied about them being the love of her life, but also mentioning that her partner moved onto another relationship right after they broke up.

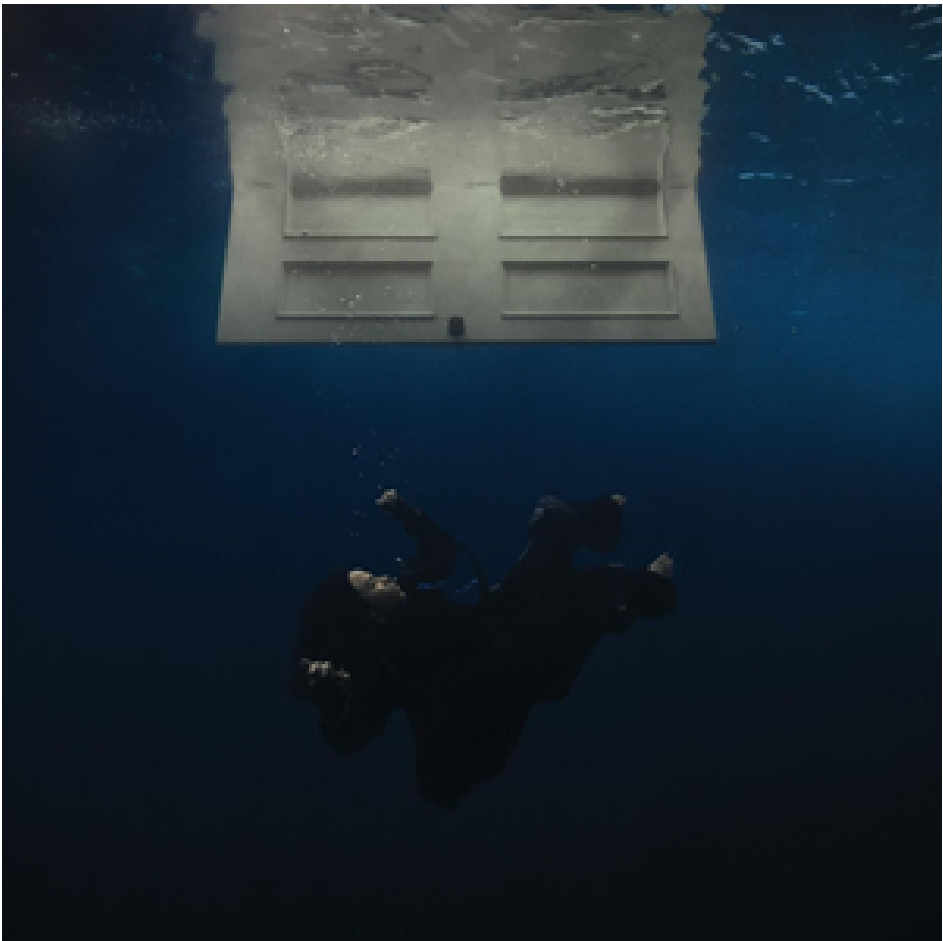
The second half of the song shifts to Eilish reconnecting with the new partner of her former lover’s, shown as a plot twist. The song is explicitly about Eilish’s relationship with Jesse Rutherford, with

lyrics like, “But I wish you the best for the rest of your life. Felt sorry for you when I looked in your eyes. But I need to confess, I told you a lie. When I said you were the love of my life,” and, “It isn't asking for a lot for an apology for making me feel like it'd kill you if I tried to leave. You said you'd never fall in love again because of me, then you moved on immediately.” These reveal that their love never existed on her end, but she didn’t want to break their heart, and thus started the relationship.

In the extended version of the last part of the song called “Over Now”, released May 22, 2024 as a promotional single, Eilish sings about how poor her relationship was with Rutherford and about this new girl that Rutherford is dating, but more specifically her relationship with her. She has lyrics like “You wanted to keep it, like somethin' you found, 'til you didn't need it. But you should've seen it, the way it went down. Wouldn't believe it,” which hint at a fight that the two had that led to a break up and question whether Rutherford dated Eilish for popularity and fame. It shows a sign of another betrayal, with Eilish having a relationship with her ex’s girlfriend.

“Chihiro” is a five minute, R&B/Soul and Pop song. The title and theme for the song is a Studio Ghibli film called *Spirited Away* with the name after the main character, Chihiro Ogino. Multiple times she indirectly references scenes in the movie. “When I come back around, will I know what to say? Said you won't forget my name, not today, not tomorrow. Kinda strange, feelin' sorrow.” This is similar to the scene when Yubaba, the main antagonist, replaces Chihiro’s name with Sen in order to make her bathhouse in the spirit world. Due to her replacing her name, Chihiro forgets she was ever named Chihiro.

At some points in the song, Eilish refers to her own relationships. “When you told me it was serious, were you serious? They told me they were only curious, now it's serious.” This could hint at two things, a term called a situationship which is a relationship where two people act romantic and do actions that seem like they are a couple but they are only friends, or it hints at a bi-curiosity a girl has with Eilish.



Courtesy of Google Images

Cover art for Billie Eilish's *Hit Me Hard and Soft*.

Album Review: *Underdressed at the Symphony*

by Janely Sanchez

Underdressed at the Symphony is a 36 minute, indie-rock, country and R&B album released on March 1, 2024. It was produced by Faye Webster and Drew Vandenberg, with *Secretly Canadian* as their label.

The backstory of the title is Webster’s experience going to a symphony orchestra in Atlanta, Georgia, where she grew up, but getting tickets last minute and not having formal clothes to wear.

Webster gained popularity recently with her song “I Know You” from her album “Faye Webster” released on May 12, 2017. “Better Distractions”, a single released September 10, 2020, even got former president Barack Obama to say it was one of his favorite songs in the year in 2020.

The track listing for *Underdressed at the Symphony* is “Thinking About You”, “But Not Kiss”, “Wanna Quit All The Time”, “Lego Ring” featuring Lil Yachty, a long time friend of Webster since middle school, “Feeling Good Today”, “Lifetime”, “He Loves Me Yeah!”, “eBay Purchase History”, “Underdressed at the Symphony”, and “Tttttime”.

Underdressed at the Symphony was decently received, with a 72% from *Beats Per Minute*, 7.5/10 from *Pitchfork*, 7.9/10 from *Paste*, and 8/10 from *Exclaim!* with each of them giving good reviews. Brianna Corrine for *Beats Per Minute* said about the album, “Her ability to speak about truly complex and philosophical facets of love and the self in a lyrically simplified way, but with sonically expansive and cohesive instrumentation, is admirable and incredibly progressive in the world of genres and storytelling.” Sam Small from *Paste* declared that, “Webster's lyrics are like the underlined sentences of a novel—the lines glow from the page, compelling you to frantically dig into your purse to find a pen.” Adele Julia from *The Line of Best Fit*, which rated the album an 8/10, said, “Amidst the unexpected twists in its production, Webster still retains a strong narrative voice throughout, her intentions unfolding with each new line.” From *Exclaim!*, Megan LaPierre says the album

“builds upon the frameworks she’s established and pushes them to their limits.” Many critics have spoken about Webster’s unique style and tune and how she puts her thoughts from her everyday life into her music.

“Underdressed at the Symphony”, a song named after the album, is mainly about Webster dealing with losing a former partner after a breakup while maintaining a



Courtesy of Google Images

Cover art for Faye Webster's *Underdressed at the Symphony*.

somber tone to describe her sadness. In it she states, “I’m depriving myself of happiness, something I’m really good at. I wanna see you again, see this is why I’m confusing.” Webster stops herself from happiness due to this break up, and she wants to see this person again, who supposedly broke up with her.

Webster spends money to distract herself from her ex, but it doesn’t seem to be working, and she spends all of it on things she doesn’t need. “I know you haven't told your mother yet cause she invited me over again. But I’m not surprised. It’s something you do all the time.” Webster’s partner kept their break up a secret from their mother, Webster continues to get invited, making her sadness worse to get rid of, knowing that their ex’s mother still likes her.

Her sorrow continues when she's at the Atlanta symphony orchestra and she recognizes some songs that her ex showed her, crying at a symphony whilst underdressed. Throughout the song, she wonders if they are feeling the same way, but doubting it right after.

“But Not Kiss”, one single out of four, may be about the former partner

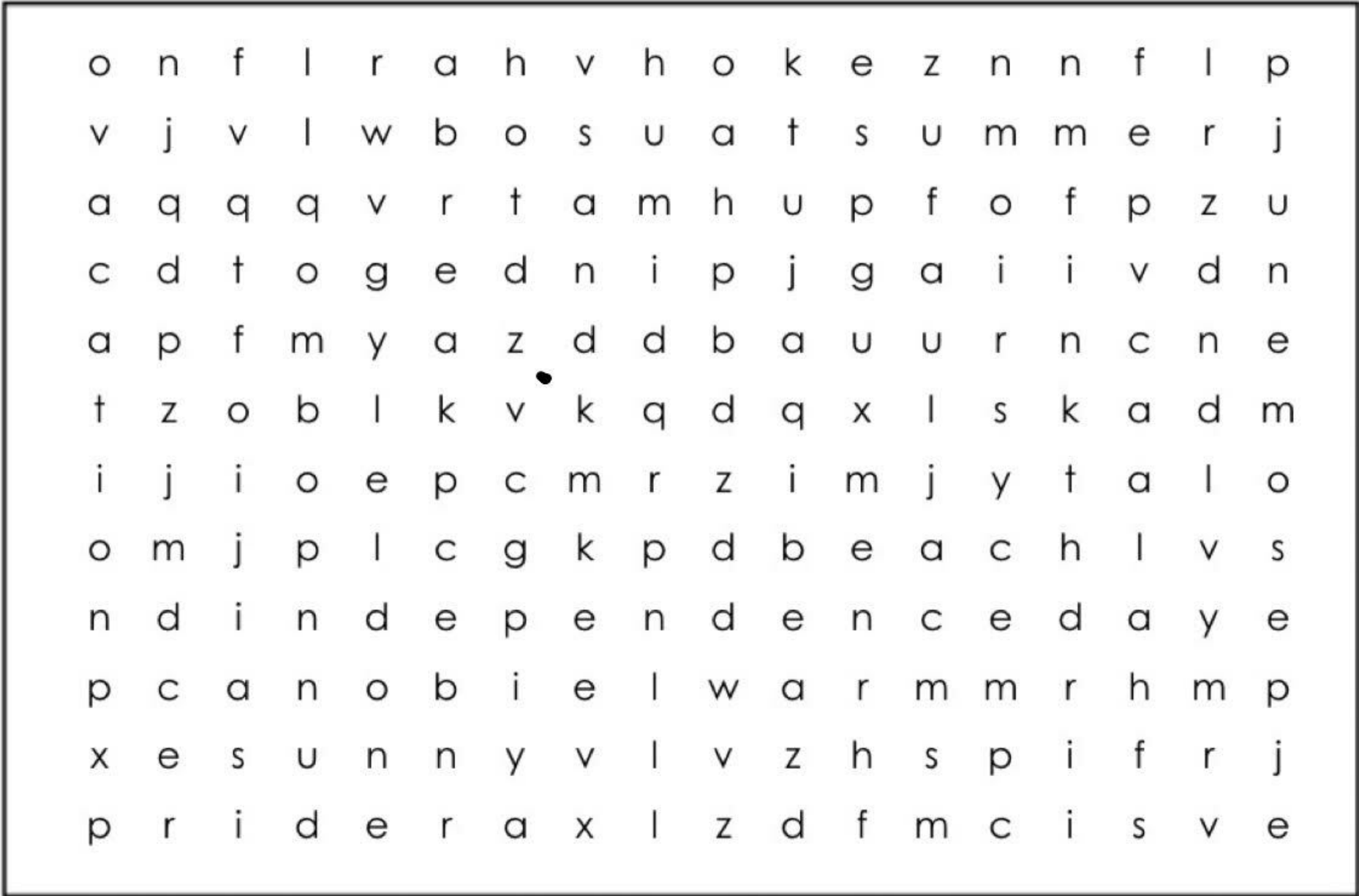
Webster had. In it she sings, “I want to sleep in your arms but not kiss, I long for your touch but don't miss. Don't want to regret any of this.” She longs for their touch, but she doesn’t want a romantic relationship between them again due to the heartbreak she had previously. She says she doesn’t want to regret any of it because she doesn’t want to experience that again. “I want to see you in my dreams but then forget.”

Webster wants to relive the happiness she felt in the relationship, but not remember after because she would want more of what she can’t have and make her longing worse. Experiencing the goodness in the dream, and forgetting to avoid hurting. “We're meant to be but not yet.” She reveals the end to the relationship, the end was because she wasn’t ready for a relationship and she couldn’t commit to a serious relationship. She wishes that there is a place where she and them could be together again. “You're all that I have but can't get.” She wishes to have them back but the relationship is over and there isn’t a way to have them back. “I hope you're okay but I won't ask. If you're in a good place, I won't mess with that, but I'm here when you need, I always have.” Webster expresses her concern and worry for her ex, but she also respects their boundaries. She confirms that she doesn’t have a place to put herself anymore and she understands that they know that she’s always there when needed. Near the end of the song, she has a state of understanding about the relationship with her and them.

“Lifetime” is a song where she truly understands the relationship between her and her ex, and how they could never be together again. “Can’t imagine me before you in a lifetime.” This lyric can either mean that Webster knows she cannot be with this person again, or that she can’t imagine her life before this person, and the latter seems most likely. “When I said I mean it, didn’t really mean it..... Every minute you are in it.” Webster once again states that she wasn’t ready for a serious relationship, and she didn’t mean everything she said in the relationship. She wishes she could be in the future. “No conversation, I get you verbatim in a lifetime.”

Webster understands how their ex feels even without words, it’s more on actions. She realizes for the rest of both their lives they won’t have the same relationship and memories as they have had before, but they will always be there for each other whenever they need one another.

Summer Word Search

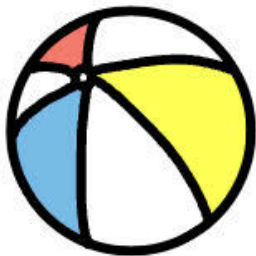


Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden ➡ ⬇ and ↘ .

august
beach
break
canobie
finals
hot
humid



independence day
july
june
park
pool
pride
sand



summer
sunny
vacation
warm

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2023-24

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