



HSSA'S

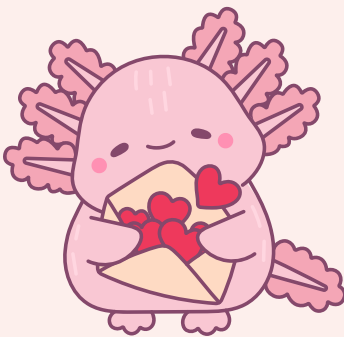
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY + VALENTINE'S EDITION

Valentine's day bingo

Ella Crawford

Psst: a Valentine for you!💌



Don't skip out on the day that celebrates love! Love and connection are not only great for our mental health as students; they also strengthen our relationships with ourselves and others, making life more fulfilling.

Valentine's Day is about so much more than romantic love! Don't feel bad if you don't have a date this year (I certainly don't lol). Instead, pour your energy into yourself and those you care about. If you do have someone special to celebrate with, take a moment to cherish it.

Here's your excuse to give and receive love—and your challenge to avoid doom scrolling through this Valentine's Day season <3 (but of course if doom scrolling is what you love, we won't judge—it's on the card xx). Feel free to share your filled-out board so we can repost!

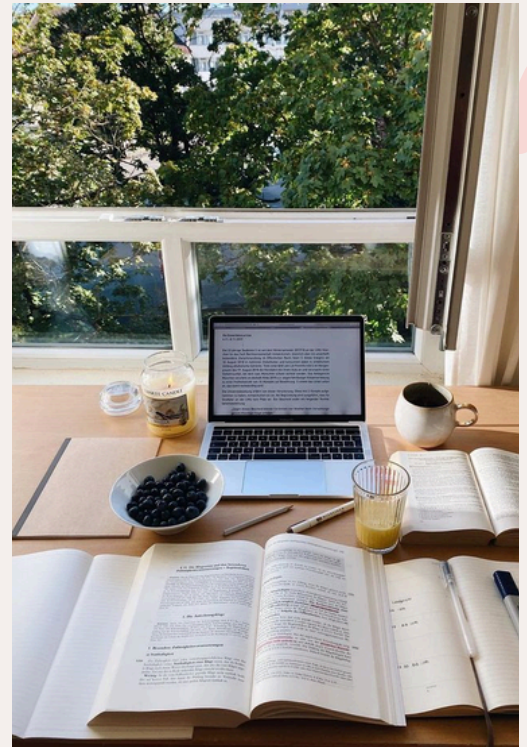
Make & give love/appreciation notes (paper or voice notes)	Go on a date/ take yourself on a date	Take the best nap of your life	Pinterest board for Valentine's aesthetic	Make schedule for midterms but ~decorate it~
Go on a colour walk	Take a relaxing bath	Tell your friends you love them	Movie night	Do a themed workout
Hear-me-out cake	Galentine's day party/hang out	Treat yourself with what you love	Attempt to bake something	Game night
Write letter/ make video for future self	Dance	Cook a more-elaborate-than-usual meal	Buy flowers for someone or for yourself	Make a shared playlist
Perform a small act of kindness	Talk to someone new or someone you haven't seen in a while	Read a novel, poetry, short story, etc.	Explore a new place	Organize /redecorate your space



CARMELA
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All is Fair in Love and Midterms

Happy February HSSA! We hope you had a strong start to 2025. This year, Valentine's Day falls on Friday, February 14th. However, the time in between now and then feels quite far-off. For a lot of us, it's hard to look forward to celebrating Valentine's Day with our friends and loved ones when we're slumped with due-dates and upcoming exams. Surviving the midterm season may seem impossible, but you made it through last semester—you deserve to experience the joys February has to offer.



And remember, Valentine's Day doesn't merely have to be associated with romance. I mean, let's face it, not all of us are in relationships. The day could be about celebrating friendships—whether that's Galentines, Palentine's, or just a self-love day. Here are a few ways to celebrate Valentine's without falling behind on midterms!

- Movie Night

An easy way to wind down after a long day of responsibilities is to watch a movie. To set the mood, put on a cheesy rom-com and host a movie night with friends! If a romantic comedy doesn't seem to fit the itinerary, put on your favourite comfort movie or take it back a few eras and unwind with a classic throwback.

- Creating Playlists

What better way to romanticize the season than to create playlists filled with all your favourite love songs? You could listen to these songs while you're locking in for midterms or celebrating the events of the month. Playlists are a perfect way to set the vibe, whether you're in solitude or celebrating with friends. The creative possibilities are endless. To spice things up, you could even create an Anti-Valentine's Day playlist!

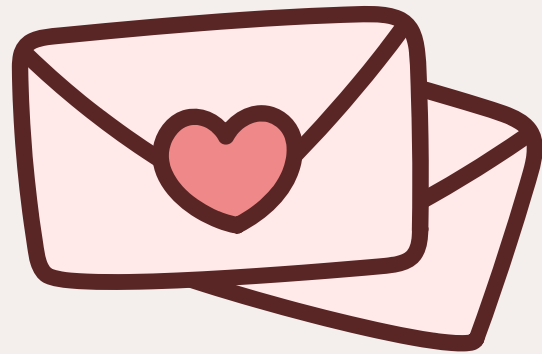
- DIY Valentine's Treats

If you have some extra time on your hands, perhaps you could make heart-shaped snacks. For healthier options, cut hearts out of strawberries and watermelon or arrange a fruit bouquet. If you're craving something sweet and savoury, coat them in chocolate and add some pretzels to the mix for an extra crunch.



- Writing Letters

In the digital age, it's become increasingly rare to receive physical copies of heartfelt notes. Handwritten letters can be personalized however you like and don't take much time. They also serve as a form of meditative journaling, allowing you to reflect and practice gratitude toward your loved ones. During a stressful time for many of us, writing down what brings us joy is a healthy way to momentarily take our mind off our anxieties.



As we approach our last midterm season of the year, don't forget to make time for the small joys that February brings. Maintaining balance is essential for optimizing our daily functioning, and that includes taking proper care of our health and wellbeing.

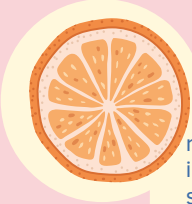
With that in mind, let's use the festivities of Valentine's Day as an opportunity to recharge and power through the upcoming midterm season! Thanks for reading—the Apple Newsletter team is rooting for you!

Self-love During Midterm Season

By: Alex Rowley



Midterm season brings lots of stress and we often neglect to take care of ourselves during this time. Practicing self-love is crucial, even when things become overwhelming. To do our best on exams, it's important to take the time to love ourselves the way we deserve.



1.) Eat healthy

Fueling your body is always important, especially when your brain is in overdrive during midterms. Eating well helps you feel better, think clearly, and work more effectively. It's important to eat foods that nourish your body and mind. Snacks that may be good while studying include dark chocolate, nuts, and berries. These delicious foods have memory retention potential that may benefit your studying!

2.) Take Effective breaks

To get more studying done, it's tempting to skip breaks. However, it is shown that taking breaks refreshes your mind and body, boosting productivity. These breaks allow you to return to your work with improved focus and set you up to study more efficiently. Consider activities like taking a walk, talking with friends, reading a book, or listening to music. Doing something unrelated to studying will help you reset and prevent feelings of burnout.



3.) Relax

Sometimes the stress from midterms might be overwhelming, which is why it's so important to take the time and relax your mind and body. It's alright not to study constantly. Prioritizing your mental health is just as important as your academics. Activities like breathing exercises, calming music, or meditation can help you reduce stress and relax. Taking the time to care for yourself will benefit your well-being and improve your academic performance.

4.) Physical Activity

Even during busy periods like midterms, maintaining an active lifestyle is very beneficial. Exercise helps reduce stress, improves focus, and gives you a rewarding break from studying. Whether you prefer activities like going for a walk, yoga, going to the gym, or even playing your favourite sport, being active will clear and refresh your mind, making studying more effective in the long run.



5.) Self-care

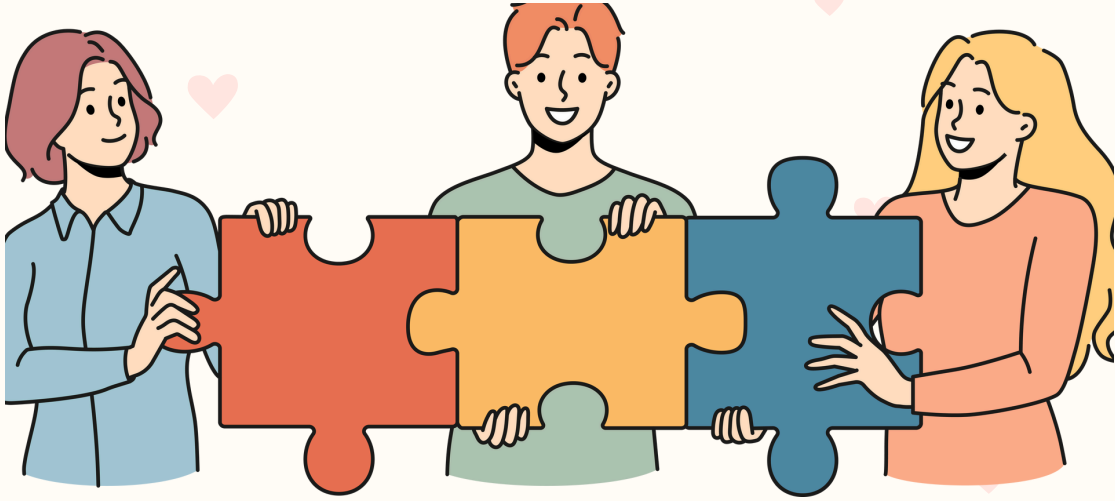
During exam season, it's easy to forget to take care of ourselves and show yourself some love, but it's an essential practice for physical and mental well-being. Taking the time for self-care will help make you feel better, which will help improve your motivation. Try practicing mindfulness, taking a relaxing shower, or even reading something for fun. These small acts will remind you that you are more than your grades and allow you to give your best effort.

6.) Positive Self-talk

When you are overwhelmed with stress, negative self-talk can quickly take over. You should shift your mindset to your desired achievements, rather than focusing on mistakes. Using affirmations like "I believe in myself" or "I can do this" will motivate you to do your best. This will also help you create a positive attitude and mindset, increasing your confidence and resilience when entering exams.



Midterm season can take a toll on both your physical and mental health. By taking care of yourself and approaching exams with a positive mindset, you can become capable of tackling challenges with positivity and confidence. Remember to be kind to yourself and practice self-love this midterm season. Good luck!



As we roll into second semester filled with new adventures and challenges, you may find yourself feeling homesick and over the dreadful winter blues. These feelings are common and valid as we adjust to a shift in schedule and responsibilities. There are many ways to help mitigate these emotions on campus that will help you find your second home on campus.

Western's campus is constantly bustling with different events and clubs for individuals of all backgrounds and interests. Whether it's a cultural club or a book club, engaging in campus activities is a great opportunity to find your community and meet people who may be feeling the same way as you. Not only will you be able to meet so many new friends but you have the chance to build on your passions and unwind from your studies. In addition, seek out friends in your classes or programs to form study groups. The academic life doesn't have to be in solitude. Studying with others allows for shared experiences and support through difficult challenges because everyone has different strengths and weaknesses.

Another way to cope with homesickness is to get to know your current home—the lively city of London! Exploring the city not only distracts from feelings of sadness but also helps you form new connections with the place you now call home. London is filled with nooks and crannies of study cafes, escape rooms, and delicious food waiting to be discovered. When campus gets too busy, and you can't find a spot at Weldon, head out to the city library or a cafe for a more serene study spot. Then, take a break by exploring downtown endless London's thrift shops and bookstores for hidden gems. Each exploration can lead to new discoveries and memories that make the city feel less like a foreign place and more like your own.

Homesickness is a natural feeling when making such a drastic move to a new life and city. If the feeling gets too overwhelming, don't be scared to reach out to Western's support services, such as mental health counsellors and wellbeing workshops. If you're an international student, the International & Exchange Student Center is a great resource for virtual support, workshops, and events for you to stay connected and meet students in similar situations.

Finally, there are always ways to stay connected with loved ones from home. Take the time out of your week to call your friends and family to catch up or plan for visits home to take a break. University passes in the blink of an eye, so take a breath and try to enjoy it. And don't worry, you'll be home before you even know it.

Handling Homesickness: Ways to Feel Supported and Connected

By: Maggie Li