Hi, we're here. I'm Dominic, and I'm going to be interviewing Ben and Ethan. It's pleasure to be here, Dominic. Yeah, it's great to be here. Then my topic for this interview is going to be virtual learning as a whole. So Ben, whenever like you first started doing like virtual learning, whether I was in like 8th grade or freshman year, what was your initial opinion of it?

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So my first thoughts when I first heard about it were originally kind of mixed. I was excited that obviously it kind of felt like just a break from schools, 8th grade, end of 8th grade. So there wasn't very much work to do anymore. We were kind of wrapping up. We'd all picked our high schools where we were going. So it did feel a lot like a break. So I was excited about that. But it was also very strange. It's like kind of new world kind of thing. Obviously none of us had ever experienced it before, so it was a whole new.

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A new thing, basically a new life experience. So going in was very interesting thing because I was excited to have basically just a break, but it was also curious of where it would end up and what was happening in the future. I definitely agree with Ben. We started Virtual learning. I think it was about grade. We had half the year more or less cut off from our school experience.

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I think that there are some good advantages to that and disadvantages coming into virtual learning. I think it was an interesting experience. It's definitely different than anything else with experience well through our school lives. I think it was for me, it's kind of a learning experience for myself, like getting to like open up and like embrace, like and figure out like what I want to do and things like that. Like at home all the time. You can't just like go out and do things. I think it's like very relaxing time for me.

1:49

Ethan, what were the, like challenges you had all throughout, which will learn? Goodness, there's a lot. OK, So I think the main one was keeping up with grades and homework. Like, I think freshman year was like the big game changer coming into high school and things are just starting out and you're fresh. New experience, really. And when you're at home on your couch or bed, as I was with your lab stuff on your lap, just typing away or whatever you were doing.

2:17

I think it was hard to, I think like just keep up with different things that were going on. So like, for example, homework for me was difficult because I'm at home and there's so many distractions going on, different things like that, which was the main problem. I mean, yeah, there was originally not too many problems, especially in 8th grade. Like I said, there was not a huge workload towards the end of 8th grade.

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But definitely freshman year was was really, really hard. Like Ian was saying, first year high school, you're meeting new people. I mean really for a lot of kids, for the first time in four years, maybe even 8 years if you were the same school from preschool to 8th grade. So that is a very formative year. I think is is learning how to meet new people in a in a more older setting. And for a lot of us that pretty much didn't happen at all.

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Especially through a camera, and the only thing you can see is a little dot with a couple of letters most of the time. So if you had somebody's contact, you kept talking to them. But if you didn't kind of up a Creek without a paddle, I like also like you said, grades, keeping track of all of the assignments and really just maintaining focus throughout the day was.

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Like a nightmare. There was so many weird little websites and things. I remember actually this is unrelated to virtual, but one of our teachers got fired within the first week, so we were stuck with the substitute pretty much the whole year. That was crazy. This is very strange cuz our our substitute teacher was learning the material with us as we went. So just kind of things like that, you know, trying to keep up, trying to keep grades up. That was another hard one and trying to meet new people at all.

4:07

Was we're all challenges. This is something for me too. Was I completely forgot about this. But like, I'm very freshman year we had just got Wi-Fi at our house and my computer was having a lot of issues. And sometimes I would try turning things in and it just, like, completely shut me down. There's a lot of tech. Tech, Tech. Yeah. And I'm obviously like this freshman. Wow, I'm so young. I don't know anything about computer science, even though I'm now going to a computer school. So ironic enough. That was a difficult.

4:37

But after a while, virtual learning light thing, like your major distractions were well, Minecraft. Yeah, Minecraft, Yes, Sir. Yeah. I mean, I think the biggest problem was that you were in your house a lot of time. Like I was in my my room and there are there's like a TV and an Xbox in there and it takes 2 button pushes to open any video game in the world.

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So, like, just the sheer willpower, it took some days to not turn the wolf on was crazy. And I'm not saying that I was on school the whole time, that it definitely didn't have that willpower all the days. I definitely agree with Ben on this one. So, like, when you're at home, right? There's unlimited potential for what you could do and there's unlimited potential for anything that could happen, but there's only limited potential for what you're supposed to be doing, you know?

5:35

Yeah, tiny little. That's it. That's all of the things. A bunch of dots on a screen with nobody talking except for the teacher. And it's very hard to stay focused on learning all of these different algebra problems or who did this in history or why This makes sense grammar wise. You could just have a TV right there. Nobody would notice you playing. Yeah, nobody holds you accountable.

5:58

And also something else to think about was nobody was there to stop you from cheating either. Yeah, yeah, you could be like on your phone looking up the answers on a test for example, or who knows what You could have been doing well behind the screen without your camera. How do you think virtual learning affected you as a person? I mean, I would say overall it didn't greatly affect my personality.

6:27

It was definitely a little hard, especially towards the end when I started to realize that there was an actual world, like outside the door, You could open the door and there was people there. Well, the problem was it was behind like a glass wall. You couldn't go out without a mask. Exactly, exactly. So when the pandemic started to end, I was like, gosh, now I have to learn social skills and get over social anxiety and all that crazy stuff. So I mean.

6:57

Just kind of things like that were the main changes to like who I was. But like I said, I don't think it really affected my personality too much. See, me personally, I'm exactly the opposite. Before this in 8th grade, I was more of a very much quiet, like almost. I don't want to say insecure, but I feel like I was insecure like I had a I was I was a mysto weird kid. And I'm sure you realize that because you went to the same school as me.

7:26

But I feel like virtual learning has like changed who I was in a very positive way. Like I changed my hair, I got more confident myself, I started working out and all these things were beneficial for me because I was at home in a comfortable, relaxed environment. I had nothing to do today except for go on school for like about half the day. And that's really all you needed to do. I know it's successful. Yeah, I know a couple of people that have had similar similar things the the time away, it was almost like a.

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Rediscovering them kind of moments, which I thought was cool out. Like I said, it didn't happen as much as me. But yeah, do you think without virtual you would still be like the same person that you are in the world? Definitely not. I think that this virtual learning thing, despite as many complications and problems that I personally had, I think it was a very beneficial experience for me and getting more confidence or just.

8:21

Not being afraid to meet up and talk to people who are, like going outside and meeting out with new people or talking to people online or whatever be. I think that virtual learning for me personally, was a big like, open your eyes, wake up. This is, yeah, a relaxing experience. Here's what you need to do. You have time to do it. Just as long as you get focused on who you are as a person online. Still keeping track of what you need to do. Yeah, I feel like it was good for me. Yeah, I think it was also good for me, I don't think.

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The virtual learning itself changed who I was, but I think the the challenges of coming out of it did a little bit, especially that getting over social anxiety and stuff like that. I am much more comfortable in social situations now that I it was kind of like a like stark reentry at first. There's a steep learning curve but it was I think it was a good thing to have that kind of snap back into reality and.

9:19

And also be coming back into reality with all my other peers because we've all been through the same thing. So it was almost like a common enemy, kind of brought everybody closer together. So yeah, And I feel like our grade in particular is very close knit, even though some people like myself don't really like talking or like opening up conversations, things like that, I still feel like everybody is close. We all know each other and we all respect each other and there's no bad things that happen for the most part.

9:48

So, yeah, for my final question, like, I know like earlier at the start of this year, everybody came and was like, oh, we don't need the mask anymore. We're probably not going to have to do like virtual learning. But then like after the incident, we had like a week or two weeks of virtual learning. Do you think like that worsened you again like with the virtual learning or to go a bit better off just going straight back to in person?

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I would say staying in virtual learning was it was beneficial for me, but at the same time, it was starting to get old, you know? Yeah, it kind of felt like your hand was being a whole step away Eventually. You're in high school, you can just like hold on to somebody's hands, like you were here through it, and it's time to step up and go to the real world and figure out what you need to do. I think it is definitely good at first, especially coming back out of the traumatic event, but like.

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It like Ethan said, it was definitely like the end of freshman year felt like, oh thank God, finally we're out of this. And then kind of going back in for two weeks after, you know, tragedy was like, are you kidding me? Like I'm more one to see my, you know, be around my friends even. I mean I don't think going to like school in a in a different building that was suggested. I don't think that would have been a good idea, but I would have liked some more connection.

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Especially recovering for a lot of people than just another virtual couple weeks. Are you talking about like the incident that happened this year? I'm talking about? Yeah, like the the virtual after the incident. OK, yeah, definitely. I OK. That changes things a little bit. So I think in recording to that, I think that was good for some people, bad for other people, good for some people. Being you're in the comfort of your home with the family, your cats, your dogs, your fish, your birds, your rats, whatever you have and I think.

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That was like a good time to relax, just calm down. Everything's going to be all right. You're just going to be just fine The same time, I think you didn't have any connections, really, unless you had people's numbers or things like that. I do think that virtual learning was beneficial for some people. But then again, you know, other people didn't really get a chance to communicate with others and they feel like, isolated or, yeah, things like that. But thank you for answering my questions. Yeah, thank you. Nice to be here. See you later.