

Photo Illustration

2013 KSPA REGIONAL CONTEST

Assignment

Using the information provided in the story, design a photo illustration that is no larger than 8 inches wide by 10 inches high (though it can be smaller). It can be a vertical or horizontal. The photo illustration may be submitted in color or black and white, and should be printed on 8.5 x 11-inch paper.

You must include a brief paragraph describing the effects applied to the photo and explaining how your photo illustration helps tell the story.

Description

You are a staff member of Ad Astra High School's The Star. Your editor has asked you to create a photo illustration based on the story provided.

School Info

Name: Ad Astra High School
Location: Aspera, Kansas
Mascot: Box Turtles
Enrollment: 850 (grades 9-12)
School Colors: Green & Gold
Yearbook: The Honeybee
Newspaper: The Star

Contest Info

This is a carry-in contest.

Please attach your assigned contest number in the upper right-hand corner on the back of your photo.

Do not put your name on the entry. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students are not to request help or advice from anyone other than the KSPA Executive Director. All work must be that of the contestant.



Story

Bessie Smith heard the instructions clearly. She just wasn't sure — here, sitting on a rubber mat in a dimly lit room — exactly how to translate them into reality.

Salabhasana. Bessie, a senior at Ad Astra High School, knew she was supposed to make her body look like a locust's, but without the whole exoskeleton thing, it wasn't working for her.

The yoga instructor tried to provide some help:

"To start the locust pose, lie on your belly with your arms along the sides of your torso, palms up, forehead resting on the floor. Turn your big toes toward each other to inwardly rotate your thighs, and firm your buttocks so your coccyx presses toward your pubis."

Bessie didn't even know she had a coccyx, let alone how it related to her pubis. Still, she soldiered forward, thinking that if she thought like a locust, she might eventually look like one.

"Exhale and lift your head, upper torso, arms, and legs away from the floor. You'll be resting on your lower ribs, belly, and front pelvis. Firm your buttocks and reach strongly through your legs, first through the heels to lengthen the back legs, then through the bases of the big toes. Keep the big toes turned toward each other."

OK, that made some sense. Bessie balanced on her belly and lifted everything else in the air.

"Raise your arms parallel to the floor and stretch back actively through your fingertips. Imagine there's a weight pressing down on the backs of the upper arms, and

push up toward the ceiling against this resistance. Press your scapulas firmly into your back."

Wow. Bessie now started feeling good about the pose, actively engaged, and strangely, at peace. (Plus, she was getting a free anatomy lesson.)

"Gaze forward or slightly upward, being careful not to jut your chin forward and crunch the back of your neck. Keep the base of the skull lifted and the back of the neck long. Stay for 30 seconds, then release with an exhalation. Take a few breaths and repeat 1 or 2 times more if you like."

Bessie Smith is one of several students who have found stress relief by taking yoga classes at the Aspera Health and Fitness Center. A few months ago, worried about an upcoming history exam and an AP English test, Smith turned to yoga. She's now taking three classes a week.

According to a new study in the Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, teenagers who participated in three yoga classes a week experienced a 20 percent reduction in anxiety scores, were 10 percent less moody and showed an 8 percent improvement in their general outlook on life.

Josephine Baker, a yoga instructor at the Aspera Health and Fitness Center, has been teaching yoga since 2003. She sees some teenagers in her classes, but not many. She said young adults shy away from the class and fail to realize all the benefits.

"With advances in technology, teenagers live a somewhat sedentary lifestyle," Baker said. "As youngsters,

they grew up with Gameboy and Play Stations and as teenagers, they've become socially active by using MySpace, Facebook and of course, cell phones. So physically, yoga can provide strength training, build balance and strength and lengthen the muscles. Teenagers can also greatly benefit from yoga with respect to mental well-being."

A teen's life is filled with school, sports, part-time jobs, friends and social media. Baker said their active lifestyles leave no room for a quiet time, even during the evenings. Their stress — peer pressure, home and school life, body image and more — can make an impact.

One way yoga manages stress is through breathing techniques. According to Baker, breathing patterns impact the nervous system.

"When we breathe in a shallow manner, we can activate out sympathetic nervous systems ... this can create higher heart rates and more tension in the body. Using various breathing techniques, we can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which can calm and heal our nervous system," she said.

This type of breathing can calm a student during an exam, a future business meeting and even help handle long lines at the store.

Athletes can also benefit from yoga.

"It helps to stretch all muscles groups releasing tension and tightness in the body," she added. "So much attention is placed on strength and cardio training that we forget that muscles that are stretched and relaxed not only make for a more

Story cont...

well-rounded fitness level, but helps to prevent injury as well. Mentally, it helps one to focus, especially when using breathing techniques, whether in practice or on the field or court.”

Ella Fitzgerald, a registered nurse and instructor at the Aspera County Technical Education Center, introduces yoga to her health occupation students.

Every spring, students who are preparing for a career in health care take one yoga class. Fitzgerald said the session is considered complementary medicine and goes along with other medical practices like lab work, X-rays and more.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that yoga can reduce blood pressure, lower

heart rate, relieve lower back pain and relieve anxiety and depression.

Fitzgerald said many students react positive to the session.

“Many of them have heard of yoga, but never really knew what it was. They were surprised on how good they felt with one session,” she said.

Fitzgerald said a few of her students enjoyed the session so much they participated in classes or did yoga at home.

Last year, Baker visited the class as a yoga instructor.

The session cleared up confusion about yoga. Even though it is offered at many fitness centers in Kansas, it is still misunderstood.

“You always hear comments that you are just sitting in a dark room

chanting with incense burning. Nothing could be farther from the truth. At the fitness center, we teach our classes in a yogafit style, which means that classes are designed as a cardio class,” Baker said.

You don’t have to be a teen to enjoy the benefits of yoga. Researchers at Boston University said a group of yoga novices — after three months of sessions — had a 240 percent higher mood score than those limited to a walking routine.

Yoga has helped Bessie Smith handle the pressures at Ad Astra.

“Before yoga, I was a walking stress ball,” she said. “Now I’m at peace with myself and everyone around me. And I know what it feels like to be a locust.”