

Established in 1936

# The Doon School WEEKLY

"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot

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## BRUSHES WITH LEGACY

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## NAVIGATING KNOWLEDGE

A report on the S Form interaction regarding future careers.

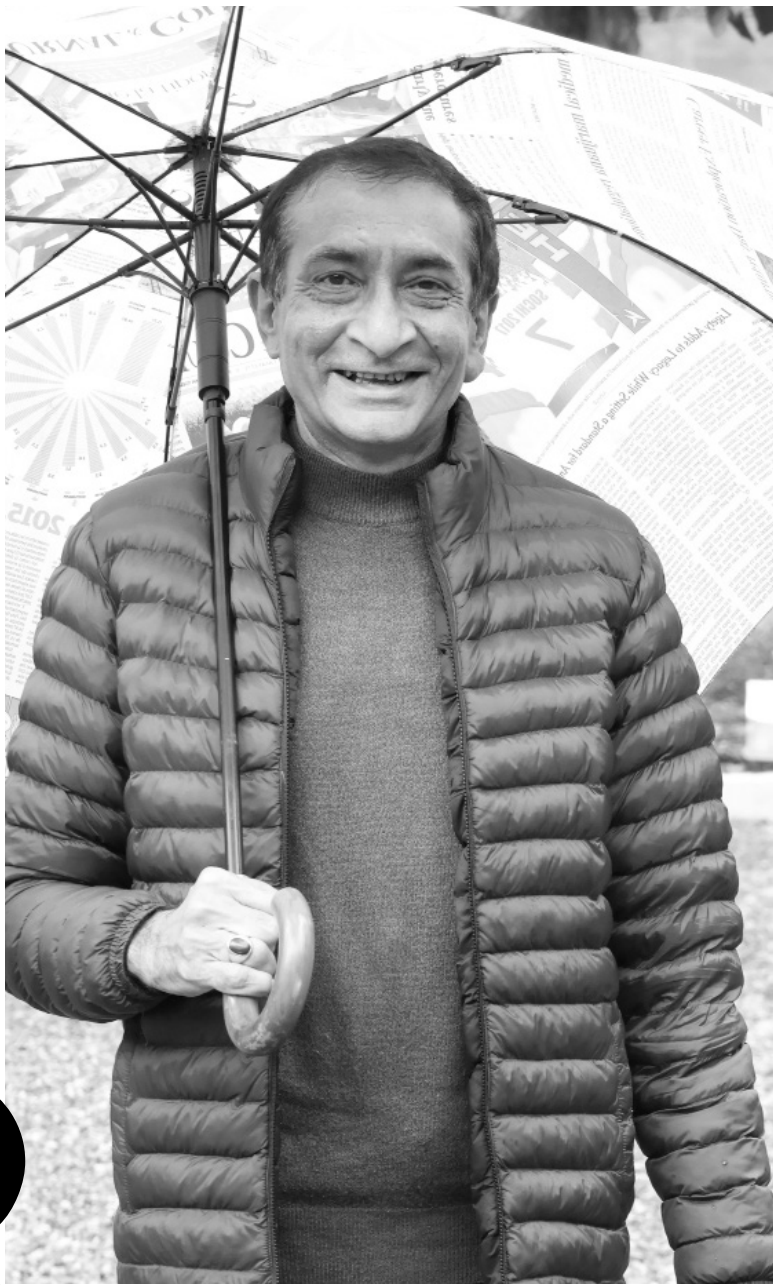
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# 31 END OF AN ERA *years of service*

AAQ Sir, or Mr Ashad Qezilbash, has been a pillar of our School Community for years; aiding greatly in the growth and development of generations of DoscOs. To many, he has been not only a perfect Master, but also a wonderful friend. His impact as a Master has reached many spheres of our School, and his legacy is truly unforgettable. *The Doon School Weekly* greatly appreciates his remarkable contribution to the School over his 31 years of service and wishes him the very best for his future.

*A friend and  
mentor to all*

# AAQ



.....  
*On this occasion, Students and Colleagues write about their experiences with AAQ.*  
 .....

I've always seen AAQ Sir as a quintessential boarding school Master, the kind you see in movies and read about in books. He possesses a rare combination of humour, wit, loving concern and, of course, timeless wisdom.

I first encountered him as my teacher of English in C Form, and as with all my teachers, I developed a desire to impress and eventually get close to him. From there, I had the good fortune to have him as my Tutor. More often than not, our Tutorial meetings were tense or serious, but he always managed to undercut the tension simply by breaking into song or cracking invariably humorous jokes.

Personally, in a confusing time when academics, co-curriculars and expectations were overwhelming, AAQ Sir was the rock with whom you could discuss anything and everything, knowing that it'll be received warmly and kindly. Thank you, Sir, for everything. You will be deeply missed.

-Rehhan Chadha

.....  
 Twenty-four years ago, as instructed by the then Deputy Headmaster Mr Jayant Hari Har Lal (JHH), I made my way over to Foot House (the old bungalow) to introduce myself to a Master, who was to be my HoD as well as the Housemaster of the House that I had been assigned to as a Tutor. It could have been a double whammy if AAQ had not been AAQ. I had in him the kindest and most considerate senior in both the English department, and in the House. Ashad would prove to be the complete mentor and guide for a newbie in School. His affectionate and generous heart has drawn many a new Master into the fold and he has furthered the legacy of Doon Masters.

But when I reached his home that first day, he wasn't there! As is his passion and compulsion, Ashad was out shopping...for another not so necessary item for his gorgeous home. Instead, I got to meet two gracious ladies – his mother and dear Abia. It marked the beginning of a lifelong connection that began as a fun-filled friendship and has over the years developed into a familial bond. And like any family, we have laughed, and we have cried. We have grieved and we have rejoiced. We have fought against each other and we have fought for each other.

One has to share good times and bad to test, strengthen and solidify any relationship. Ashad and his family and I have been through experiences together that have done precisely that. A major percentage of our lives have been spent together here in Chandbagh, and the Qezilbashes leaving campus is a very poignant moment for me. But *c'est la vie*...

Fortunately, Abia will continue in the Archives, and they have chosen to live in Dehradun and I am sure that will ensure that the special association that we share will continue through our retired years, too.

So, *adieu*, Mr Q. I wish Abia and you peace, good health and halcyon days!

- STK

.....  
 It's extraordinary to imagine that Mr Ashad Qezilbash is retiring. AAQ has remained one of the strongest connections for so many people to The Doon School for decades. His remarkable tenure as the Housemaster of Foot House, accompanied by many stints as the Head of the English Department, will remain memorable to anyone who experienced them. Besides, the assured hospitality and welcome at the fantastic home he and Ms Abia Qezilbash built will always remind us of the proverbial "good old days."

It is through my involvement in English Dramatics that I got to know him. Year after year, for nearly a decade, we worked on so many plays together.

It is from him that I learnt to listen rather than constantly offer opinions as he allowed me, at 21, to pompously talk about film adaptations of Shakespeare and how he really should move with the times. I learned the meaning of sacrifice as he happily made one when he insisted that I be appointed Master-in-Charge of English Drama instead of him.

Of course, none of this would ever have been possible without his greatest ally, Abia. Right from their days together in Foot House to the plays they worked on together to the incredible work she has done in the Archives, they have, together, forged an extraordinary legacy of teaching at Doon; one many have tried to emulate.

It will be strange to think of Doon without AAQ, loping strides making their way to the Main Building, never late for a class, a meeting or a party. We haven't worked together for over a decade, but I will never forget all the kindness and generosity with which Ashad and Abia welcomed me into their home. Ashad and I are friends and colleagues, and though I don't have an elder brother, if I did, he would be one to me.

They say you can't choose your family, but you can choose your friends. I am eternally grateful that AAQ saw this young kid in 2003 and helped me choose, wisely.

- K V Arjun Rao (Ex-Master, 2003-12)

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Mr Qezilbash has not only been a mentor to his students but also to many of us Masters in the last three decades that he served in School. AAQ has the unique ability of letting everyone feel comfortable in his presence and cheerful after a conversation with him. Over the years, his home has always been open to all students and Masters. Both him and Abia (ABQ) provided a home away from home to everyone in the community.

He wore many hats during his tenure in School and in each role, he displayed his maturity, empathy and courage to ask the difficult questions. I will always be grateful to him for teaching me how to be patient and be able to find humour in all situations, even challenging ones. I have always benefitted from his wise counsel and will miss not having him walk past my room in the Main Building. Luckily, I know that I can reach out to him as he will continue to reside in Dehradun.

As he moves on into the next phase of his life, I wish him all the best and hope he will continue to visit us time and again. It has been an honour and privilege to have served alongside a legend like him!

- KLA

It was just another regular routine day at Chandbagh. Classes were over, and we were all in the CDH packing in some bulletproof *chapatis* for lunch.

That was when we first heard that a new teacher was joining as the Master-in-Charge of our Tata A Batch. For some unknown reason, Tata A had a lot of Housemasters. In fact, all of ours came and went pretty quickly (probably had something to do with the large civet cat population living in our false ceiling).

As we walked back from the CDH, my batch huddled together, wondering what kind of chap this new Master would be. Our conclusion? It didn't matter — he wouldn't last long. Boy, were we wrong!

Halfway through Rest Hour, a Junior came running into our room. The Housemaster had called us outside the Common Room to meet our new Master-in-Charge. We sat on the quadrangle steps, eyes fixed on the Tata House Field, waiting for this mystery man.

At first sight, he looked like something straight out of a Nat Geo documentary. A tall, slender young man (not much older than an S Former himself) walked towards us faster than most boys could run, his giraffe-like strides covering the field in seconds. Before we could say 'Jack Robinson,' he was upon us.

"Hello there! My name is Ashad Qezilbash, from Lucknow," he said. "My initials are AAQ." His easy-going demeanor instantly put us at ease. AAQ radiated a happy, peaceful energy. After we introduced ourselves, we asked which Master's house he had been assigned. He pointed across the field to the corner house and asked if we wanted to come have a look.

To our horror, the house was totally empty. Besides a mattress on the floor and a toaster with a loaf of bread and a slab of butter, there was absolutely nothing else. Mr AAQ had clearly left Lucknow in a hurry.

But what struck us was how, despite having nothing, he opened his home to us like we had known him forever. Even though the house was bare, we felt comfortable and at ease. He even managed to satiate our limitless appetites with some warm makhana toast. The way he treated us on his very first day reflected his warm-hearted nature. We were over the moon knowing he would be our Master.

There was never a moment of awkwardness or formality that usually exists when meeting a new teacher. This was truly a transformative moment in my life — I had found a dear friend in my new teacher.

When I said he left Lucknow in a hurry, I wasn't joking. The man arrived, quite literally, with nothing but the shirt on his back. Nobody knows that better than me because I had to lend him my black home togs — something he, to this day, has not forgotten. He was to borrow them until his *samaan* arrived 'a few days later' by truck. Spoiler alert: The truck never came. Yet Sir very sweetly returned my pants on Golden Night.

In the following years, AAQ Sir blossomed. And as he grew, so did I, embracing valuable life lessons that shaped me into the person I am today. If I may share a few, they would be these — no matter what life throws at you, always have a big heart, lead with kindness and integrity, and most importantly, never change for anyone.

I was lucky to have AAQ Sir when I needed guidance the most. It is unfortunate that he will leave before my son joins Doon, but it gives me immense pleasure knowing that he stayed at Doon for over three decades, inspiring hundreds, if not thousands, of boys like me.

AAQ is one of a kind. There can never be another AAQ. But we can hope and pray Doon gets someone like him in the near future, someone who, too, can empower young minds with such joy.

I wish Mr and Ms Qezilbash a wonderful life ahead, beyond the warm walls of Chandbagh.

- Fateh Akoi (ex 7-TA, 1996)

# This Week in History

1453: Mehmed II begins his siege of Constantinople.  
1888: ‘Jack the Ripper’ claims the first of his eleven victims in Whitechapel, London.  
1902: ‘Electric Theatre,’ the first full-time movie theater in the United States, opens in Los Angeles.  
1909: Robert Peary and Matthew Henson become the first people to reach the North Pole.  
1912: The RMS Titanic begins its first sea trials.  
1968: Martin Luther King Jr is assassinated at a motel in Memphis, Tennessee.  
1974: Hank Aaron passes Babe Ruth as the all-time leader in career home runs by hitting his 715th.  
1981: The Osborne 1, the first successful portable computer, is unveiled.  
2011: India wins the Cricket World Cup for the second time in its history under the captaincy of MS Dhoni.

## SALIENT SPEAKERS

The **Shrivindu Mehta Memorial Award for the Best Assembly Speaker in English** has been awarded to Yuvan Grover.  
The **Shrivindu Mehta Memorial Award for the Best Assembly Speaker in Hindi** has been awarded to Abhinav Kumar.

Congratulations!

## COURTING GLORY

The **Dr SR Vohra Tennis Championship** was won by Uday Rana.  
  
Kudos!

“  
Your love makes me strong. Your hate makes me unstoppable.  
—  
Cristiano Ronaldo

## BRUSHES WITH LEGACY

The Grand Slam is awarded to the winners of the Cricket, Hockey, and Football House cups in the same year. The current trophy was presented by the Old Boys of Tata House in 1986.  
Hyderabad House won the first Grand Slam in 1953, followed by Tata House in 1954. Kashmir House achieved it in 1971, winning the hockey and football cups and sharing the cricket cup with Jaipur House. Tata House claimed the Grand Slam in 1986, and Kashmir House in 1989. Hyderabad House won it again in 1995 and 1999. Only once has a Grand Slam winner also taken the House Cup for Athletics, which was Hyderabad House in 1953. It was last won by Jaipur House in 2011.

## UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

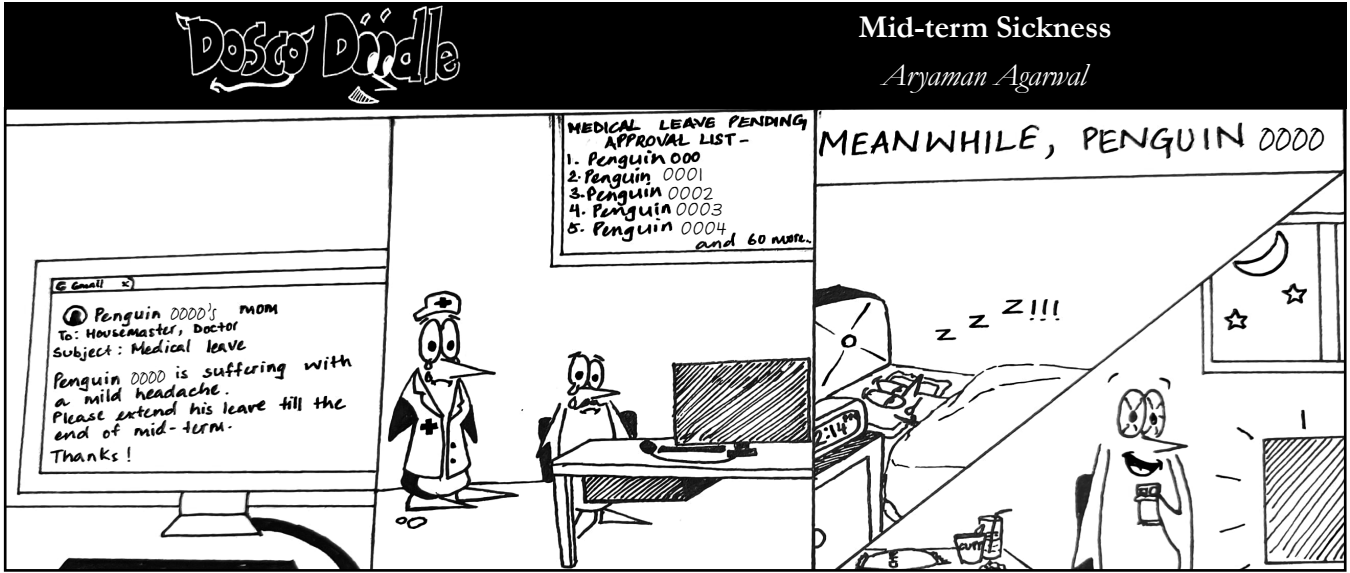
*I am not in the unrest, I create my own.*  
**ANC**, well-rested.  
*Attention please, attention please.*  
**Ganadhipati Aryan**, the PT leader we want.  
*Don't judge a cover by its book.*  
**Arrjun Gondalia**, book-ish knowledge.

## CONSILIUM BIBLIOTHECAE

Namish Agarwal has been appointed the **Library Council Secretary** for the year 2025-26.  
We wish him a fruitful tenure!

## Around the World in 80 Words

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari was hospitalised in Karachi due to his deteriorating health. After undergoing criticism, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu reversed his decision to appoint the Navy commander as the Security Chief. The US announced its tariff plans in the recently held White House Event. The Indian Navy Warship ‘INS Tarkash’ seized 2500 kgs of narcotics in the Western Indian Ocean. The Gujarat Titans clenched a much-needed victory against the Royal Challengers Bengaluru, breaking their early momentum.



# Great Expectations

Members of the School Community share their predictions for the upcoming midterms.

Midterms this year are expected to be vastly different from last year's, given the safety concerns then. For this reason, we go into these Midterms relatively rusty and unprepared. As such, incompetency and whining is to be expected, on my part at least. *Har Ki Doon* boasts temperatures well below zero, but who needs toes anyway. The view is magnificent, if only we didn't have to trek to get there.

- Aarav Patel

The trek to Kushkalyan should bring cool mornings, warm daytime hikes, and chilly nights, with blooming meadows and patches of lingering snow. I expect breathtaking views, 'rewarding' (a polite term for exhausting) climbs — something my counterparts from Tata House, having already been there, assure me of — and a mix of adventure and learning. Traveling with a new Tutor adds to the excitement — sharing experiences, gaining insights, and building unforgettable memories together!

- Amarnath Sahu

I'm hoping the mid-term trek to Chandrashila is more about scenic views and less about questioning life choices on steep climbs. Chopta and Sari village should be a nice change from the red-white walls, and some delicious *pahadi* food might just make the tents worth it.

- Abhir Kohli

# Navigating Knowledge

Agastya Chamaria reports on the session about career options for the S Form.

The session for the S Form held earlier this week proved to be truly enlightening and provided insightful and applicable information on a plethora of subjects. Ranging from topics such as marine engineering and ocean dredging to diplomatic ties between India and Belgium, and the latter's contributions to the culinary world, Mr Bram Vanderpitte and Ms Babette Desfossez ensured that the session was especially engaging and undoubtedly memorable.

Mr Vanderpitte serves as the Managing Director of International Seaport Dredging Private Limited (ISDPL), a prominent subsidiary of the DEME Group, headquartered in Belgium. The DEME Group is a global leader in dredging and environmental projects, renowned for its innovative solutions and commitment to sustainable development. In his role at ISDPL, Mr Vandepitte oversees operations that are pivotal to enhancing maritime infrastructure, facilitating trade, and supporting economic growth.

His presentation included multiple videos on the live, on-site action of the DEME group's projects in Singapore and other port destinations around the world. We witnessed multiple visuals of grandiose and sophisticated machinery that the corporation has employed internationally to facilitate grand projects, such as the expansion of the Singapore coastline for trading purposes. He also announced its upcoming projects in Indian cities such as Mumbai and Port Blair. Interestingly, he also mentioned the handsome salaries that come your way as part of the engineering and design team, when he noticed the audience become particularly drowsy.

Ms Babette Desfossez serves as the Trade & Investment Commissioner at the Embassy of Belgium, representing Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT). As part of the Economic & Commercial Representation of Flanders, she plays an imperative role in nurturing economic ties between Flanders and international markets. With a focus on trade promotion, foreign direct investment and business partnerships, Ms Desfossez facilitates opportunities for Flemish companies looking to expand abroad while also assisting international firms seeking to invest in Flanders.

Ms Desfossez's address was undoubtedly more amusing, as alongside her presentation, she made sure to add remarks and her observations about the Indian technological sector and the rich demographic, having lived in the nation for more than 11 years. She also eradicated certain misconceptions about her own native country, Belgium, such as how 'French' fries have a distinctly Belgian origin. The speech also included various junctures where the education, ethical and governmental systems of both nations were compared and contrasted, leading to both the speaker and audience leaving with a more nuanced knowledge about these cultures.

The afternoon came to a close with a final address by Mr Alok Sinha, ex 58-K, from the Batch of '72, the individual without whom the interaction would not have been possible. He recounted his own days at School, where he went nearly a year without bedding in Kashmir House due to the sheer fear of approaching his Housemaster!

# The Week Gone By

Ganadhipati Aryan

Another academic year, and yet another desperate struggle to keep up with the absurdity of our School life. If you're reading this, congratulations — you have survived a full year of School now finally being promoted to the next Form, even if your marks were below average. :(

The eerie calm of our mornings has once again been replaced by the rhythmic suffering of Doscots trudging around the field, some doing the 'PT' Table, others creatively redefining the term 'PT.' Of course, a mysterious outbreak of "post-exam fatigue" has conveniently sent several students into a self-imposed medical leave. It's an epidemic, truly. Who knew exams could cause such

severe physical ailments?

Meanwhile, with Midterms lurking around the corner, the panic levels have begun their slow but inevitable ascent. This, of course, coincided with the arrival of our new textbooks — massive, intimidating, and promising to single-handedly ruin our lives. Some brave souls have already attempted to skim through them, only to be met with regret and an existential crisis. To those who haven't opened them yet, stay strong as the bliss of ignorance is a gift.

On the sports front, hockey season is in full swing, and so is the steady influx of injuries. The infirmary has never been busier, with players limping in, some sporting bruises, others pretending their minor scratches are career-threatening. The swimming pool has also reopened, giving students a chance to cool off both literally and figuratively after the chaos of the week.

A warm welcome (and a fair warning) to our new D and C Formers, who have now officially entered the cycle of Doon's busy life.

Speaking of bracing for impact, certain Houses have now introduced "evening PT" because apparently, one round of morning torture wasn't enough. The classroom ACs have mercifully been turned on, providing a rare moment of comfort before reality smacks us in the face with the news that classes now begin at 7:15 AM. That's right — our mornings are now even earlier, because clearly, we weren't suffering enough already.

And so, as we conclude yet another week, we look ahead to the madness still to come. More early mornings, more assessments, more bruises, and probably more medical leave applications after Midterms. Until next time!

## Wordsearch

### Clues:

1. A Harvard dropout who co-founded a social media giant from his dorm room.
2. A tech visionary who co-founded a company named after a fruit and revolutionized personal computing.
3. Known as the "Queen of Pop," this singer and actress built a career on constant reinvention.
4. A billionaire philanthropist who co-founded the company that brought Windows to the world.
5. An industrial pioneer who made automobiles affordable for the masses with assembly-line production.
6. A comedian and actor known for his energetic stand-up and iconic roles in 'Beverly Hills Cop' and 'Shrek.'
7. A legendary director behind some of Hollywood's most famous blockbusters, including 'Jaws' and 'Jurassic Park.'
8. A University of Texas dropout who turned his high school PC business into a global company.

V V I K N T P H T N E N B B R D O Y J P  
Q W N R I A M H J S R G Q N W J U U S M  
E O N X L S G A F U L W G P L Z O G Q E  
X Y O L W C O U D P F P C P P C I B E E  
M E P H C V R M P O V G T R O A G E S N  
L E E R R Q R G Q S N I D H M R K V Y O  
X Z O T J O V W Q J Y N X I I K S N G Z  
H V H Q O A F O R D K P A Z E V F X Y B  
C V B W W Q I F V P I Y V D P Z P H N K  
L D Y F Y R Z Y P O C C T A F Y D T R K  
T K P J L A J B R N B J W V H C L H K T  
V Z B W N O S V I D J L G P N X J Y T A  
I B D S F D P U N L I S R L J M B Y L D  
O O I X V K I I M D L U Y Y A P A Z F X  
N V Q I Z D E A P R M G W Z Q Z V J B X  
Z E B N K E L B J J N F A H X Q G R L J  
C J E C J D B Y A B U L J T T O M Q K Q  
R H S J X A E Z U C K E R B E R G U U R  
C N N Y B Z R L S T X L C Y A S V N F N  
U H K A S I G V L K A A M W C J U J V Q

2. Jobs	5. Ford	8. Dell
1. Zuckerberg	4. Bill Gates	7. Spielberg
Answer Key:	3. Madonna	6. Murphy

Source: <https://www.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/wordsearch/>

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