



# Shiner Scoop

Issue #4

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## Personal Experiences with Home Devices (Alexa, Google, Siri)

By: Alayna Walcott and Keira Holbrook

Hey Shiners! Have you heard the theory about how our home devices such as Alexa, Google, or Siri are always listening to us? Read more to hear some eighth grader's personal experiences with these home devices.

Sianna Kuehn was talking about Ariana Grande to her friends. Her Alexa suddenly went off and started rambling on about random things. Nate Elliot was doing his Algebra 1 homework one day. He was working on a problem and was trying to figure out what  $x$  equaled. He started whispering to himself and saying, "What does  $x$  equal?" His Siri heard him and suddenly went off and said, "X marks the spot!" Gavin Shorten was talking to his mom about a PlayStation game he wanted. Later that day, he got on YouTube and an ad popped up for the same exact game he was talking to his mom about. Gavin also has an Alexa in his house.

Jenna Peelman's mom, Mrs. Peelman, was talking about a place she wanted to eat at. About ten minutes later, she looked at her phone, and there was an ad that had the place she was talking about eating. Avery Boes was talking to her friend one day, when her Alexa suddenly said, "Sorry, I don't understand." Onetime, Tanner Peters was talking to his sister and he said the name, "Sirena" and his Siri looked up everything he was saying before that.

There you have it Shiners! Maybe you should think twice before buying an Alexa or Google. You never know, they might be listening!

## Google Home or Alexa

Google Home and Alexa are both great pieces of technology, but which would you choose before buying? If you want to know some of the cons and pros of the two devices, then look below

Google home pro's Google home con's

- Doesn't have as many skills - Some features are available -It can give factual responses
- Can identify different faces - Doesn't have many third-party
- Can cast videos to your tv compatible home items -Bluetooth audio streaming - Can't read or send emails
- Can change aesthetic - Lunch phase is not customizbale

Amazon Alexa Pros Amazon Alexa Cons

- The Alexa has a remote control to control the volume. - People can find your location
- Alexa can hear you even with music playing. - Must be plugged in.
- Alexa is very good with giving factual answers. - Access Alexa's conversations
- No monthly subscriptions. -Only speak one language
- Alexa can get you deals. -Doesn't work with Bluetooth

Have you ever been bored out of your mind? Have you ever tried to pass the time by mindlessly scrolling through social media? Well, here's where that stops. You can always have conversations with Siri. Some of her responses are ridiculous and hilarious, while others are much more helpful. Here are some of the funnier examples:

What you say: Siri, rap for me

What Siri says: OK. Here goes. I wrote this one myself. (Apologies in advance to the Sugar Hill Gang.)

What you say: I see a little silhouetto of a man

What Siri says: Scaramouche, Scaramouche, will you do the Fandango? Thunderbolt and lightning, very, very frightening me (Galileo) Galileo, (Galileo) Galileo, Galileo Figaro magnifico But I'm just a poor assistant, nobody loves me He's just a poor assistant from a poor company Spare him his life from this monstrosity Easy come, easy go, will you let me go? Bismillah! No, we will not let you go (Let him go!) Bismillah! We will not let you go (Let him go!) Bismillah! We will not let you go (Let me go) Will not let you go (Let me go) Will not let you go (Let me go) Ah No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no (Oh, mamma mia, mamma mia) Mamma mia, let me go Beelzebub has a devil put aside for me, for me, for me!

What you say: Siri, tell me a joke

What Siri says: She responds with a variety of different jokes like, "Here's one for the kiddos: What are caterpillars most afraid of? Dogerpillars." and "At first, I didn't like the idea pf growing a beard. Then it grew on me."

What you say: Hey Siri, sing me a song

What she says: Sure! Absolutely. Ahem. OK, here I go. Ahem. Hang on, let me just clear my...Gosh. Singing is harder than I thought

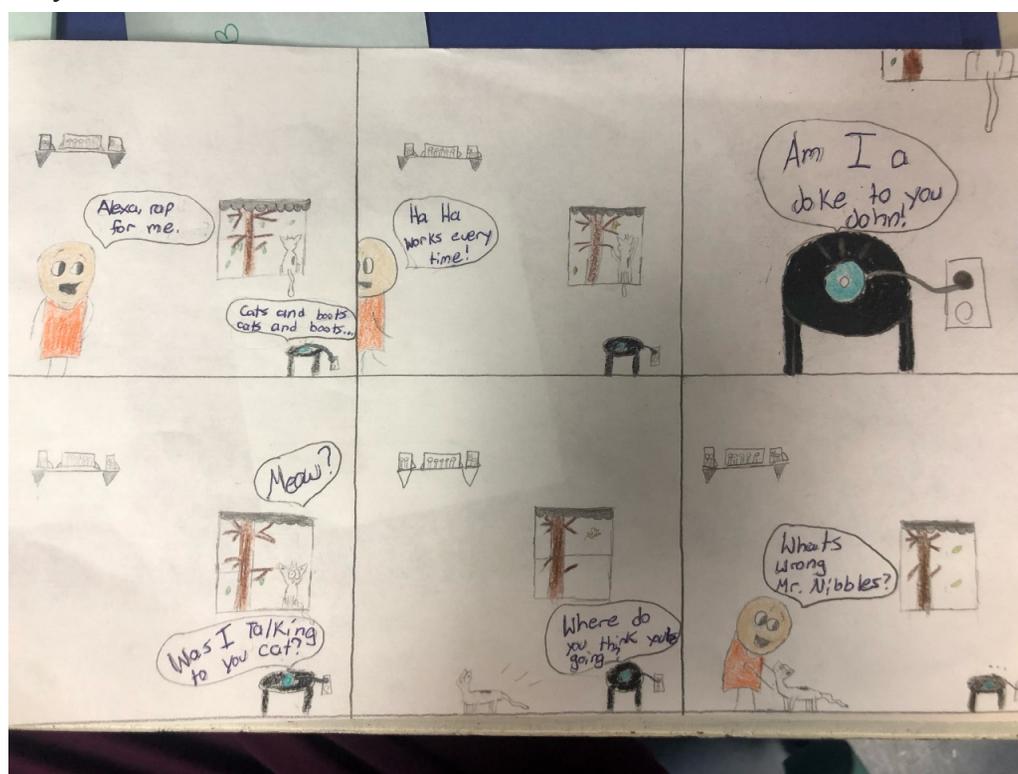
What you say: Hey Siri, why did the chicken cross the road

History of the Sport Cricket

What she says: I am not perspicacious about the peregrinations of poultry

By Allison and Breiah

By: Makenzie McDaniel and Breanna Reed



Have you ever heard of Cricket? And no, not the bug, it's a game called cricket that has gained popularity lately. Cricket which is now a national sport and has been played ever since 1844. Cricket was first devolved in early medieval times in the South-east and South of London but there were signs of a similar game that some tribes of Indians played too. Cricket is a game which can be played between two teams and eleven players on each side and your goal is to reach the set number of points which you get by hitting the ball across a boundary or wooden posts called wickets.

In 1844 the first International game of cricket took place between the USA and Canada and many games after that have happened over the course of years. As cricket grew even more popular in England it was introduced to North America, Australia, West Indies, India and Zealand and South America. Famous people have also played this sport including Karan Brar also known as Ravi from the T.V. show Jessie. So, if this sounds like a game which you would enjoy, then you should try it out!

## Are they listening in?

Smart devices are sweeping the world. From iPhones to laptops, to smart cars and tv's. Now, our phones have assistances on them. Apple produces have Siri on them. Amazon tablets Alexa, and Google phones have Google assistant. Have you ever thought if they were listening in?

Many people believe that these assistances are working with the government. There are two theory's that go with this. The first one is that the government is listening in to get personal information on people and to see if they have done anything wrong. If you think about it, it could happen. The way these assistances work is by calling out their name. How else would these assistances know you were saying their name if they aren't listening. It is smart for the government to take advantage of the one thing that humanity loves the most. To fit in, these devices are new, and people want to try new things.

Sarah Perez says, "U.S. smart speaker owners grew 40 percent over 2018 to now reach 66.4 million — or 26.2 percent of the U.S. adult population." This shows that they are taking over homes. So, why would the government use them.

We carry a smart device in our back pocket every day, well hopefully they are in your lockers. These phones have assistants on them too. Have you ever noticed that when you're talking about a certain product you start to see it more? That's because you do.

CBS news says, "Sam Nguyen said, ' she gets the feeling her phone is listening to her, and she is sure she gets ads from Facebook and Google for things she only mentions aloud.'" I myself have experienced this. Just the other day my grandmother and I were going over the grocery list. I remember talking about Toothpaste and Laundry detergent. I later got on Instagram and what ads did I see. Tom's toothpaste and tide laundry detergent.

So, watch what you say around your phones or other smart devices. You could be going to the store to buy cat litter next, when you don't even have a cat.

### Are the Virtual Assistants Watching the Teachers?

Almost everyone in the world has a phone or a computer. Some people have virtual assistants such as a Google Home, Alexa, or Amazon Echo. You can activate all of these using your voice, but could these assistants be listening to you even when you aren't speaking to them? We asked the teachers two questions to hear their opinions about this.

Question 1: Have you ever talked about a product and then your phone advertises it on a social media platform such as Facebook or Google?

Mr. Tucker mentioned that we might not realize we are being advertised the products we spoke about

Mrs. Lozier said that she has never noticed the ads being personalized towards her.

Mrs. Merica commented that she has noticed that the ads on her phone were specialized to what she spoke about.

Mrs. Meyers said that she has seen specific ads on her phone and noted her daughter has noticed specialized ads on her phone.

Ms. Wilson commented that she has noticed ads personalized to her interests on her phone.

Question 2: Do you think your virtual assistant (google, amazon echo, Cortana, ect.) is always listening/spying on you?

Mr. Tucker believes that his phone is recording without his permission.

Mrs. Lozier said that the virtual assistants might be recording her, but she highly doubts it is recording her conversations.

Mrs. Merica commented that her phone must be listening to her on some level.

Mrs. Meyers believes that the assistants are always listening to her conversations.

Ms. Wilson said that she thinks her phone listens to her conversations.

Most of the teachers we interviewed believe that their phones/virtual assistants are listening to them or they have seen ads personalized to them on their phones. What do you think about this? Do you think your phone is always listening to you? Have you talked about something and suddenly it pops up as an advertisement on your phone? If so, you may want to disable your microphone in your settings. This was the fourth edition of Teacher Tea! If you enjoyed reading this make sure to check out the next edition of Teacher Tea!

Written and edited by Kiera, Wayne, and Vanessa

There have been conspiracy theories about the Amazon Alexa. We are focusing on the aspects of the Amazon Alexa app.

The Alexa app uses your contacts to find people you know. It will also automatically put your contacts into the app if you allow it. That is a good aspect of the Alexa app. A bad aspect of the Alexa app is that it collects data such as voice recordings.

Another bad thing about Alexa that we have discovered is that it has built in microphones and cameras. Also unwanted purchases have been made before.

Another thing about the Alexa app is that you can save and add locations to your Alexa. For example, if you say, "Remind me to feed the dog when I get home." Alexa will know when you are home if you add your address into the app.

There's one more thing about the Alexa app that I would like to inform you about. Alexa can sing! For example, if you say, "Alexa sing a duet with Ed Sheeran." Alexa will respond with, "Here's my exclusive collaboration with Ed Sheeran." Then she will sing!

One thing that Alexa can do, with a single command you can set a routine. For example, you can turn lights on and off at a certain time.

You can ask Alexa anything. You can ask her jokes, sports, info, or local news, etc. You can also send announcements from your phone to your Alexa device anywhere in your home. For example, "I'm on my way." Alexa will act as a speaker and announce what you commanded Alexa to say. There are also a bunch of games and apps that you can do/open.

There are many forms and generations of Alexa. You can ask your Alexa to stream movies and shows. For example, "Alexa, stream Game of Thrones."

Your Alexa can speak different languages. Alexa can also do impressions such as Baby Groot, "I am Groot."

Well, those are some interesting facts about Alexa. You should be careful if you have an Amazon Alexa because you never know if she's listening!

By: Megan & Cloe

Band Updates

The Shiner Pride Marching Band had their second competition on the 14th of September. We received many comments saying that they did very well. The Marching Band placed 2nd in Class 3A, and they were competing against William Henry Harrison. William Henry Harrison was also in Class 3A and placed in first. Good job everyone!

This week for the Middle School Band we would like to pull out 3 special trumpets named Timmy, Greg, and Steve. Yes, they have names. They are David, Caydence, and Kaitlyn's trumpets. They are just 3 of the 8 trumpet players in our middle school band. They have told us, according to them, they must use valve oil and slide grease to keep their trumpets "safe." They also said, "All trumpets have 3 valves, 4 slides and 2 spit valves, unless you just have a weird trumpet." That sounds very confusing. So, all in all, trumpets are a brass instrument that plays in a Bb.