

TRRRRIINNGGG!!!

The School's Loudest Authority

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Five minutes to go. Then four. The countdown begins... three, two, and one. Students stop pretending to listen and start staring at the clock. Then it rings... TRRRRIINNGGG! Across classrooms, students suddenly gain the energy of Olympic-level athletes as they rush towards the exit. Guiding students and teachers alike, the school bell is an authority in itself - the loudest and clearest one.

What's your jam?

Everybody reacts to the school bell differently, and timing plays a crucial role. For a latecomer sprinting down the corridor, it's the soundtrack to the walk of shame. For a student yet to finish an exam, it's nothing short of a death sentence (yes, exams really do make you that dramatic). The invigilator, on the other hand, treats the bell like a final verdict. Pens down. No arguments. No emotional appeals. But for most students, at the end of the school day, it's liberation in audio form.

A mythical being

You're mistaken if you think the school bell exists only to bring routine into students' lives. Laced with superstition, it's almost a mythical being. In

many cultures, bells are believed to ward off evil, summon knowledge, and bring good luck. In schools, it does all that, and then some. It calls us to assembly, announces exams, and provides the dramatic background score to every academic achievement. It's not just a sound; it's a moment you feel in your chest.

Simply irreplaceable

Schools have changed since our parents' time. Smart boards have replaced blackboards, and biometric attendance has ensured there are no more roll calls. But the bell? Still in charge. It may sound smoother now - less metallic - but its authority hasn't softened. The bell has survived every upgrade, ringing through generations after generations.

Love it or hate it, we obey
The school bell doesn't need to prove itself. It simply rings, and we follow. It decides when learning begins, when hunger strikes, and when relief floods the corridors. You'd think all that power would go to its head, but it keeps doing its job until it rusts and falls silent. Until then, we'll react as if our lives depend on it. In school, honestly, they kind of do.

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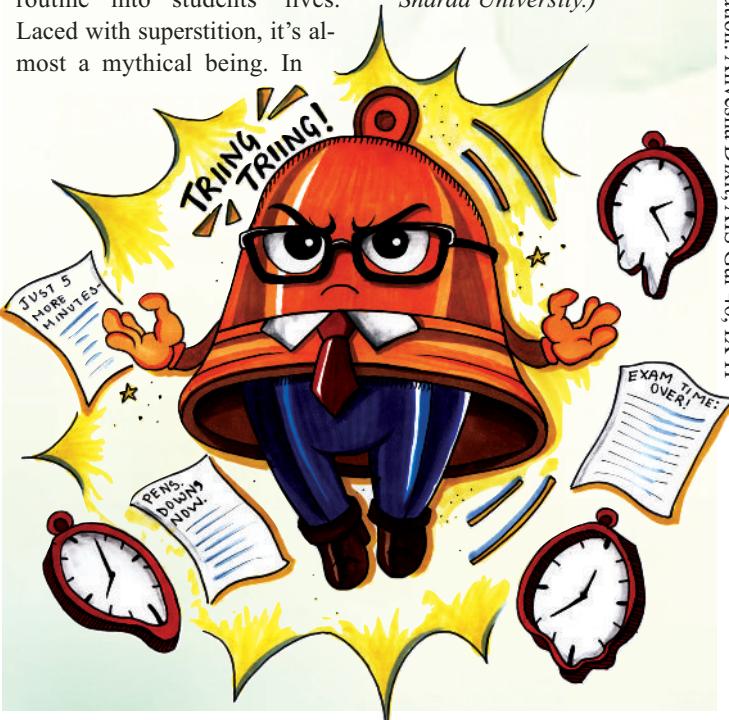


Illustration: Ayesha Khan, AIS Gur 43, XI A



Red, Yellow, Green

Diary Of The Silent Influencer Running Your City

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“Ek second aur green hone wali hai.” “Sir, line cross ho gayi.” Spotlight on me every day, every hour. Oh hi, I'm Tria, the traffic light, the one you blame, shout at, and ignore. Born in December 1868 outside the British Parliament, I was inspired by railway signals thanks to JP Knight. Before, police stood in towers pulling levers. I started as gas lamps, exploded dramatically, disappeared and returned as electric lights, courtesy Detroit officers Lester Wire and William Potts. Also, fun detail: I wasn't always vertical. Welcome to my diary, where I turn from red to read.

Monday, 7:30 am: The great school rush. Red is the angry physics teacher. Yellow is the hesitant 'break?' Green is pure joy. Shortest syllabus, hardest to remember. Truly said: I blink, therefore I am. Children know me by age three, long before alphabets because symbols speak before language. I first blinked in Kolkata in 1928 and have been babysitting ever.

Tuesday, 7:30 pm: People pray for green like I'm Alexa. Honking doesn't help. I follow timed cycles or listen to sensors. West Milford's signal stays red for five minutes so stop crying at ten seconds. Also, Red stays on top because it has the longest wavelength as it cuts through fog, rain, and smog. Yellow was added later to save your time. Before, drivers went straight from green to red.

Wednesday, 2 pm: Green arrives and his majesty the Cow strolls in. Red triggers urgency, green lowers stress, and yellow is the cliffhanger of every commute. Japan uses blue because language evolved slower than infrastructure. In Germany, pedestrians follow a tiny green man 'Ampelmännchen', now a cultural icon with merch. My Singapore cousin uses AI. I rely on whistle-bhaiya. My extended family - speed breakers, roundabouts, traffic cones help me out.

Thursday, 4 pm: Scooter guy jumps a red. Meets me again at the next corner. Scooter guy: 0.

Universe: 1. Red-light cameras reduce fatal crashes by up to 30%, which is why people hate them, for the consequences are louder than logic. I've been painted with pride colours in Madrid and Vienna, turned into cartoons in Utrecht, sports icons in Ulaanbaatar. Prague even has the world's tiniest traffic light just two bulbs squeezed into a medieval lane. Adaptation is my trait.

Friday, 8 pm: Worst nightmare? A power cut. Rules evaporate instantly. Accident rates spike the moment I stop. That's why we use solar power with battery backups. Ten seconds or twenty, you'll still doomscroll, convinced time bends for you.

Saturday, 5:15 pm: I've been hacked, studied, worshipped and ignored. I've stopped presidents and let ambulances fly. I work because millions agree to obey the same fiction that three colours can hold a city together. Philosophers call it voluntary compliance. I call it urban magic. So next time, smile or wave. Keep calm... or I'll release recorded aunty voices to silence the honks.