

THE GAPPER

GAZETTE

EVERY 2ND WEEK

“We Made It Out ALIVE!”

by Jeanrie

Week 1: Registration Day

“The day started bright and early as all the new gappers arrived on campus for registration. With curiosity, nerves, and mild panic written all over our faces, we settled into our new rooms. After a bittersweet goodbye to our parents, we officially embarked on the next chapter of our lives.

Our first challenge was to complete a 3,000-piece puzzle in just four days. What followed was a week-long blur of puzzle pieces scattered across the lounge, questionable strategies, and lots of laughter as we slowly got to know one another. At the same time, rumours about the dreaded team-building week began circulating, and none of them sounded comforting.”



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16 FEBRUARY 2026

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Week 2: Team Building Begins

“Team building kicked off on a Monday morning. We were given exactly 30 minutes to pack a bag with the “essentials”: sunblock, a water bottle, and a cap. The fear truly set in when Gio told us to line up, introduced himself as Sir Gio, and informed us that we were to address him as such for the rest of orientation. It felt exactly like the first day of high school: us as the terrified Grade Eights and Sir Gio as the intimidating matric who runs the school.

The first team-building activities were surprisingly manageable - until we reached the pool. There, we were met with what can only be described as the worst smell known to humankind. One by one, we had to submerge ourselves in a bathtub filled with rotten milk, grease, fish, and other substances that should never coexist. Between the gagging, dramatic reactions, and encouragement from one another, we eventually made it to the other side, where we were hosed off and had purple dye aggressively smeared across our foreheads and noses, just in case we were feeling too dignified.

By dinnertime, our hungry, exhausted, and still questionably smelling bodies were desperate for food. Unfortunately, nothing came for free. Before eating, we had to sort and count two buckets of white and brown rice. To add to the torture, Sir Gio handed each of us a delicious Bar One that we had to keep on us at all times, purely to test our self-control. Cruel, but effective.

That night, we slept on the unforgiving floor of the dance studio, only to be faced with the next challenge - a movie marathon. Unsurprisingly, we failed. At 12 a.m., a whistle shattered what little sleep we were getting, followed by a responsibility check to ensure everyone still had their Bar One. Shockingly, one chocolate had gone missing. As punishment, the entire team had to run to the middle gate of campus in our sleep-deprived state and shout out our core values while planking because clearly that would teach us a lesson.”

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Day 2

“Any hope we had for a decent breakfast was crushed the moment a massive pot of runny pap appeared. Still, to a group of exhausted, starving gappers, it somehow qualified as gourmet cuisine.

Not long after, we were sent off for the second part of our journey, Cape Town. We were split into three teams and dropped in the middle of the city with no money, no phones, and no dignity -just a piece of paper with clues and each other. From District Six to Camps Bay, we walked for hours, chasing clues and begging strangers for food, money, and the use of their phones. The race was intense, the competition fierce, and the desperation very real. The White Team claimed victory by reaching camp first, the Red Team followed close behind, and the Black Team accepted a painfully humbling defeat.

Reunited as one team, we faced our next challenge - building a house using only what we could find around us: wood, rocks, and leaves. Three hours passed with very little to show for our efforts besides cuts, splinters, and crushed morale. Somehow, against all odds, we managed to pull together a structure just big enough to fit everyone, which felt nothing short of miraculous.

That moment of pride lasted exactly five minutes. We were then informed that we would not be sleeping in our carefully constructed “house.” Instead, we would be spending the night in an old, abandoned bunker perched on top of a steep mountain. After a climb that felt suspiciously like Mount Everest, we finally reached the top - only to be greeted by yet another challenge.

Every hour, someone had to trek all the way back down the mountain to write their name on a piece of paper. With no phones and no clocks, there was no way to tell the time, so we spent the night guessing, hiking up and down the mountain, and questioning our life choices.”

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Day 3

“At last, the final day had dawned upon us - the final boss. Sir Gio was kind enough to “mentally prepare” us for what lay ahead, and by the looks on my friends’ faces, it was clear that whatever he had described sounded absolutely terrifying. Every ounce of energy had been drained from us as we made our way to the next challenge - the obstacle course.

The first section felt like a real-life game of The Floor Is Lava. One by one, we had to cross using planks, carefully avoiding the ground. For extra motivation, Sir Gio placed a block of cheese and ham on a rock and informed us that if we failed, our breakfast would be sacrificed. Hunger, it turns out, is a powerful driving force. With constant encouragement and teamwork, we pushed through and conquered the course.

After a brief break, we headed down to the beach, everyone clinging to one another for emotional support. Sir Gio and Coach André chose violence that morning, putting us through an endless series of painful exercises on soft sand - army crawling, jumping jacks, and movements that felt deliberately designed to destroy our legs. Still, we suffered together, pushing through as a true unit and refusing to give up.

The hardest challenge was still waiting for us. With arms interlinked and eyes closed, we were instructed to walk backwards into the ice-cold ocean, relying solely on one another to stay afloat. This was the ultimate test of trust. In freezing water and under pure exhaustion, we had to function as one. I’m proud to say that even in the unforgiving ocean, we stuck together and proved just how strong our team had become.

The drive back to camp felt victorious. Once there, Sir Gio had us doing trust falls while rumours of a delicious meal spread through the group like wildfire. Just when hope was at its highest, we were led to yet another abandoned bunker, complete with tunnels darker than night itself. One by one, we had to find our way out, symbolising the dark moments we all face in life and the choice to keep moving forward, no matter how uncomfortable or uncertain the path may be.

Dinner finally arrived, and our mouths were practically watering as we imagined the five-star feast we had been promised. That image shattered the moment the plates were lifted, revealing a sheep’s head, chicken feet, and blue rice that looked suspiciously like alien poop. And yet, despite the shock, laughter filled the room as we ate what life had decided to serve us.

The day ended with worship - not just any worship, but something known as torture worship. Each of us was given a rock to hold above our heads while worshipping, the aim being to focus on God instead of the burning pain in our arms. Eventually, even that came to an end. Sir Gio finally showed mercy, blessing us with real beds and hot showers.

That night, for the first time in a long while, we slept peacefully. Not because the challenges were over, but because we had survived them together. What began as a group of strangers had become a team, bonded by exhaustion, laughter, trust, and a whole lot of questionable life choices.”

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Day 4

“That morning, Gio drove us up the mountain to a view so breathtaking it felt unreal. A cliffside stretched out before us, overlooking the endless ocean, and in that quiet moment, everything slowed down. The serenity wrapped around the team, bringing a sense of peace we didn’t even know we were craving. We shared a short Bible study, grounding ourselves, before heading back to camp.

Breakfast turned out to be an unexpected blessing. Toast, bacon, and eggs awaited us, and somehow, after everything we had been through, it tasted like heaven itself. It was hands down the most rewarding breakfast of my life - proof that struggle really does make the simple things feel extraordinary. After eating, Gio handed each of us a piece of paper and asked us to write letters to our future selves. With full hearts and tired bodies, we made our way back to campus.

Once there, Sir Gio blew his whistle - sharp and final - signalling the official end of team building. Against all odds, we had survived. We made it out alive.

The next day was our reward. Sir Gio treated the team to a well-deserved day of fun. We shared a braai, swam, laughed, and reflected on everything team building had taught us. What started as a challenge ended as a memory we’d carry with us long after the bruises faded.”



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