Keep Calm and Think Big!

All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them. —Walt Disney

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. —Harriet Tubman

Think big and don't listen to people who tell you it can't be done. Life is too short to think small. —Jackie Kennedy

Think Big, that's NO Big Enough! Then Realize Pui Ching Middle School 2014 You Have to Dream Before Your Dreams Can Come True. —Abdul Kalam

This collection of essays is primarily the creative work of our students who, through constant practice of reading and writing as well as shrewd observation of their immediate world, pour out their hearts in the form of short stories, letters, articles and poems. Such works provide a platform for students to exchange their ideas and share their lives, enabling their communication with greater confidence.

Cover design in accordance with the theme of Drama Night 2014 “Think Big.”
The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Eleanor Roosevelt

A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.

Oscar Wilde

To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream. Not only plan, but also believe.

Anatole France

You have to dream before your dreams can come true.

Abdul Kalam
Oasis
Think Big
Dedication

The collection is dedicated to

God,

the founders of the school,

and

the inspiring principals

and teachers of Pui Ching,

who seek to make the school the best cradle

for nurturing talents and leaders of generations

in the past

now

and the time to come.
Foreword

Dr. Yip Chee Tim

It is indeed my pleasure to read all these wonderful pieces of literary works by our students. The articles, in one way or another, display the talent of the students of Pui Ching. They can write extremely well. I am deeply touched by their beautiful style of writing.

Their skills in writing bring forth special effects to impress those who enjoy reading. I am much impressed.

Good works speak for themselves.

Yip Chee Tim
Principal

2 January 2014
Subsequent to the previous revised publication of *Oasis*, there comes the heartwarming applause from various sides. With the precious experience and generous comments, we are now very honored to present to the readers yet another issue of this continual series, with a compilation of our students’ creative expression of their perception towards life.

*Oasis* is a collection of essays, which are primarily the creative work of our students who, through constant practice of reading and writing as well as shrewd observations of their immediate world, pour out their hearts in the form of short stories, novella, letters, diaries and articles. We understand that such precious perception and spontaneity towards life should never be allowed to be laid waste and it is our very aspiration to cultivate creativity in young leaders even at their early age. Sharing of insights, nourishing of the writing culture and appreciating of literary writing can inspire introspection and unleash the beauty of human minds, thus rekindling our passion for living. Linguistically speaking, it is indeed also our intention to help our students to master the language to express themselves more than adequately.

We are so blessed that teachers and students are so supportive in conceiving as well as giving birth to this publication, despite all the sweat and blood through the travails.

In taking greater pains to bring forth this issue into existence, we very much hope that when you are reading through the pages, savouring a line or two, may you envisage the oasis of freshness on the parched land of modern hectic life.

January, 2014
“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”

Walt Disney
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Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today.

James Dean
POSTSCRIPT
to the ONE
who deems me good despite my wretchedness

and

to everyone
who has been good to me in some way, somehow
“Go, and do thou likewise.” (Luke 10:37)
Pluto

Plut, the demon
Luto, the angel

the voice

ex-Colleague A
ex-Colleague B
ex-Colleague C

caller A
caller B

passer-by A
passer-by B
passer-by C
passer-by D

backpacker A
backpacker B
backpacker C

Sophie
SCENE ONE

[A huge neon sign that reads “Post Office – Serve And Deliver” hangs at the background. PLUTO sits in a chair at the front stage, looking downward]


[PLUTO lifts his face and looks around. Having located the source of the voice eventually, he looks into the distance]

THE VOICE: I’ve got something to tell you.
PLUTO: Yes.
THE VOICE: This may sound a bit sudden to you, it may even sound like a shock, but you must try to understand the situation we are facing.
PLUTO: [baffled] What situation?
THE VOICE: You know, the world has changed. We now have the Internet and the smartphone and stuff like that, and people seldom send letters to each other these days. They do not write anymore. They send messages. They text, they tap, and they type, they don’t write anymore.
PLUTO: [still baffled] And so?
THE VOICE: Pluto, you’ve got to understand that our world has changed, you’ve got to face it, and you’ve got to live with it. And you must try to understand that the post office is having a hard time. We are facing a dilemma, we have to make difficult decisions, and we have to make sacrifices.
PLUTO: Well, I’m confused. What are you getting at?
THE VOICE: Listen, Pluto, we appreciate the contribution you have made to the post office all these years. You are always hard working, nice, helpful, energetic. A role model. You are simply gorgeous. But there is a time when things start to change, and somebody has to sacrifice.
PLUTO: What do you mean? Are you going to quit?
THE VOICE: No. You are going to quit. Well, Pluto, let me be honest with you: you – are – fired. You don’t work here anymore. Pluto, reality can be too cruel to bear, but you must try to understand the circumstances. You’ve got to adapt to changes, and you’ve got to be strong, Pluto. Well, goodbye ... and don’t forget to pack your personal belongings and ... disappear as quickly as possible. Take care, Pluto. Take care.

[Light out]

[Light in]

[PLUTO, embracing a box of his personal belongings, bumps into a trio of ex-colleagues]
EX- CO A: I've heard the news. Are you all right?

EX- CO B: We all feel sorry to hear the bad news, Pluto.

PLUTO: Why me? I can’t explain that...

EX- CO C: [carefree] Don’t worry, my friend. You don’t have to explain anything. Maybe it’ll do you good somehow. Who knows? Maybe things will turn out great eventually. Don’t worry, Pluto, it’s just a blessing in disguise, always look on the bright side. [hums] Don’t worry, be happy. See? You are young, and kind and smart, you will find a better job, make more money. A promising future is right in front of you.

PLUTO: [head up, sighs] ... I don’t see anything in front of me ...

EX- CO A: [solemn] You know, things happen. Sometimes things just happen to give you a lesson. A good good lesson. You’ve got to think about what you can learn from this, you know, learn from this misery. It is sad to get fired, I know, but it’s worse to learn nothing out of this misery. Pluto, have you learnt anything from this? Have you learnt?

PLUTO: I’m too tired to learn now ... I can’t learn ... I don’t want to learn ...

EX- CO B: [analytical] Pluto, I want you to think with me. Let’s think back. Have you ever made any mistakes in your work? You are fired not without a reason. I mean, fatal mistakes, unforgivable mistakes, say, have you ever been late to work? Or have you ever been rude to anybody? I want you to think with me, seriously, Pluto. Have you ever forgotten things, things you ought to remember, like the postal codes or the mail fees or the address of a recipient? Or have you got the wrong stamp for the wrong letter? Oh, I know, I know, you must have broken some rule, right? Come on, Pluto, I want you to think with me ...

PLUTO: [palms over ears] I don’t want to think. I only know: I’ve been fired. I was in the system, but now I’m out. I’m out. I’m not in anymore; I’m out, forever.

EX- CO A: [sympathetic] Yes ... you are out, out like an outcast, out like the planet Pluto ...

EX- CO C: Yeah, the poor little planet ... but no doubt we all sympathize with your situation.

PLUTO: [desperate] Do you know what it means? Forever. I’m out forever. I will never be able to work as a postman. I’ll never be able to deliver letters to people’s mail boxes, I’ll never be able to serve my community, and I’ll never be able to ... why me ... [starts sobbing]

EX- CO A: Oh, don’t you cry, dear ...

PLUTO: Would you cry if you were me ...

EX- CO C: Well, yeah, probably ...

EX- CO B: Oh I feel sick when people cry ...

PLUTO: [still sobbing on and off] All my life, only two times I have cried. Twice. I will never forget. The first time, I got lost in a funfair when I was a six-year-old little boy. I cried ‘coz I thought I would lose my mum forever. The second time I cried when my best friend died, my very best friend. I lost him, and we
were both twenty-one years old. And now I am crying for the third time, the third time in my entire life, at the age of thirty-four, because I've lost my job ...

EX- CO C: Oh, dear, it’ll be all right.
EX- CO B: I know, it’s not only a job to you.
EX- CO A: We know it means more than a job to you ...
PLUTO: Why does it have to be me? Why my job?

[Light fades out]
SCENE TWO

[Now a huge road sign that reads “Pedestrians” hangs at the background. A post box stands at the front. CALLERS are chatting across the ends of the stage, ceaselessly tapping on their phones. PLUTO slowly wanders into the stage center, absent-mindedly with the box in his bosom. PLUTO then sits down on a bench next to the post box, eavesdropping the conversation between the CALLERS]

[CALLERS read aloud their dialogue as they are motioning their fingers over their cell phones]
[The cyber slang used in the conversation flashes over the projector screen]

CALLER A: Hi.
CALLER B: Hi Hi.
CALLER A: Going to TST?
CALLER B: Yup. At MK on MTR.
CALLER A: OIC.
CALLER B: Sorry, will be late.
CALLER A: NVM. BTW, coming with your BF?
CALLER B: Nope. He’s at work.
CALLER A: OMG, it’s Sunday!
CALLER B: FYI, he works at PCCW.
CALLER A: HR?
CALLER B: Nope.
CALLER A: PR?
CALLER B: Nope.
CALLER A: What?
CALLER B: IT.
CALLER A: Oh.
CALLER B: Lots of OTs.
CALLER A: OIC. IT? A graduate from HKU?
CALLER B: Nope. CU, BBA.
CALLER A: Nice.
CALLER B: But all day he talks about QE, QE2 and QE3 ...
CALLER A: Lucky it’s not PS2, PS3 and PSP..
CALLER B: And ECB and HSI and MPF. Boring.
CALLER A: A future CEO maybe! LOL!
CALLER B: ROFL. What about your BF?
CALLER A: Now on holiday, back from the US.
CALLER B: And?
CALLER A: Working on a PhD at UCLA.
CALLER B: OK.
CALLER A: Also a part-time for H&M and M&M.
CALLER B: Really?
CALLER A: Part-time model.
CALLER B: Cool.
CALLER A: Yeah, an ABC, handsome, charming.
CALLER B: Jealous.
CALLER A: With IQ and EQ.
CALLER B: Cute.
CALLER A: On TV last night.
CALLER B: Really? TVB?
CALLER A: ATV. A commercial for KFC.
CALLER B: OMG. You kidding?
CALLER A: Was a DJ for HMV.
CALLER B: Oh.
CALLER A: Will be an MC on BBC.
CALLER B: Should meet him ASAP!
CALLER A: Maybe.
CALLER B: BTW, what about his PhD?
CALLER A: His paper? Something like “The O&I of CS on the S&T of HS in the PM society”
CALLER B: WOW ... IMHO, sounds pretty ... philosophical.
CALLER A: LOL. Anyway, TTYL.
CALLER B: OK, CU, XOXO.

[PLUTO dashes to one end and confronts CALLER A, who keeps tapping on the smart phone]

PLUTO: Hey, stop tapping at that stupid little nerve-racking mind-boggling machine! if you want to talk to her, talk to her! [stunned, CALLER A looks at PLUTO for an instant, and resumes the tapping] Hey, I’m talking to you!

[Ignored, PLUTO dashes to the other end]

PLUTO: [gets neurotic] Look at me! Can you at least look at me? Please! Can you write decently and let people understand at least? [wails] It is for people like you that I lost my job! I lost my job because of you! Freak! Can you hear me? [begs] Hello?

[Ignored, PLUTO dashes back to the first CALLER, intending to fire another string of complaints]

[Both CALLERS, still tapping with their heads down, start walking to one another from the two ends. They cross paths at the stage center, rub shoulders and, however, go into their separate ways without noticing one another]

[PLUTO is left alone on stage]
PLUTO: [yells at their distancing backs] Hey! Try writing a letter, perhaps? Please! Can you hear me? Can you hear? [dejected]

[Enters PLUT, who carries a giant fork]

[With the entrance of PLUT, the lighting and the mood of the scene change, accompanied by the disturbing and queer sound of the ticking clock]

PLUTO: [taken aback] How ... how do you know my name?
PLUT: Well ...
PLUTO: Who are you?
PLUT: Guess who?
PLUTO: Do I know you?
PLUT: You always know me.
PLUTO: Are you a ghost?
PLUT: [playfully] Make a guess.
PLUTO: [skeptical] You start to look familiar ...
PLUT: Three chances, OK?
PLUTO: So you are ... [circles around PLUT and scrutinizes every detail] ... you are ... come on, any hint?
PLUT: Well ... [makes a grimace] Arrf ...
PLUTO: [eventually] Oh ... are you me?
PLUT: Bingo! Oh boy, clever as always!
PLUTO: [baffled] You ... are ... me?
PLUTO: But you look different ...
PLUT: Well, tell me, who looks the same on the inside and on the outside?
PLUTO: So ... are you me on the inside? [hesitates] You look ugly ...
PLUT: Well ... some people look even uglier. You are way too subjective, Pluto ... [changes the subject] Hey, wait, I know you are down in the dumps, aren't you? [wicked, plotting] Will there be a faint possibility that I may help you? Huh?
PLUTO: [depressed] I have lost my job and ...
PLUT: And you want to get back your job?
PLUTO: [earnest] Yes! Yes! And I would like to ...
PLUT: And you would like to get back your job immediately? Right? But, hell, I regret to tell you that it's absolutely out of the question, because once you are fired, you are fired.
PLUTO: So ... do you mean ...
PLUT: I mean, what you can do at the moment, however, has come down to only one possibility.
PLUTO: What is the ...
PLUT: The possibility is plain for us to see: revenge.
PLUTO: Revenge? What do you ...
PLUT: What do you know? In fact, when it comes to revenge, you have a number of options.
PLUTO: A number of ...
PLUT: Listen. Revenge can take several forms. For example, you can set a time-bomb in the post office, well, best in the rubbish bin in the manager room, [gets more excited and dramatic] and you can explode the whole place within seconds. BOOM! Game over. Hell, it will be thrilling! [giggles, wicked]
PLUTO: But don’t you think it's ...
PLUT: If you think it's all over too quickly and may not bring you the maximum excitement, well, what about stealing the letters from the post office and [starts to look morbid] burning them pages by pages into ashes. Oh, the idea really gives me the goose bumps! I'm sure the post office will regret having asked you to quit your job.
PLUTO: Well, um, but what if ...
PLUT: If ... if that is not the kind of revenge you are looking for ... [struggles for another idea] ... let me see ... hell, I shall have another idea for you ... what about ...

[Enters LUTO, who carries a ukulele]

LUTO: Don’t listen to it, Pluto. It only came to raise hell for you. Those are only silly ideas from your dark side.
PLUTO: And who are you?
PLUT: What the devil?
PLUTO: [baffled] Are you ... me, too? You look more pleasant than this ... [then turns to PLUT, and back, embarrassed] Well, nice to meet you ... oh, I mean, nice to meet me ...
LUTO: Yes, I’m here to help you. Good heavens, stop listening to your dark side! The devil can quote the scripture for its own purpose. [to PLUT] Stop disturbing him! Get away now!
PLUT: [teases] Oh, you really scare the devil out of me, my angel ... [rebuts] So, do you have any good plans? The young man has lost his job. What do you suggest?
LUTO: It will be fine, Pluto. Losing your job doesn’t mean it's all over. The purpose of your existence is not yet over.
PLUT: Right! The purpose of your existence is now simple: [crudely] ruin their lives. Ruin their lives as they have ruined yours!
LUTO: No, no, people may be bad to you, but you can still be good ...
PLUT: An eye for an eye, Pluto!
LUTO: It will make us all blind, Pluto!
There's a time for revenge, Pluto!
There's a time to return good for evil, Pluto!
Don't be a coward, Pluto!
Only love makes you a hero, Pluto!
Revenge is the only way, Pluto!
Revenge is not an option, Pluto!

[As the sound from both sides becomes increasingly intolerable]

Quiet! [short silence] I'm confused. [another silence, looks sideward]
What do people do when they are confused? Tell me, when they have a
dilemma like this? I mean, a conflict between the bright side and the dark
side? Between the angel and the demon?

Hell, listen to the dark side! It's easier!

[pushes PLUT away] I don't know ... some people resort to flipping a coin ... [flips a coin] You want to try? Head or tail?

[snatches the coin from LUTO] [teases] I can see no head any more! Sorry, it's
only a flower now! Let me tell you something, [authoritative] I know people
who do this: paper, scissors, stone. [PLUT plays with its own hands. Several
ties in a row]

[amused] Stop it! This looks stupid. [saddened again] I've lost my job. And
what can I do now? [ponders, then notices the ukulele] Can I ... can I have
some music? I'd like to have some music. I listen to music when I'm troubled.

Music?

Give me the length of a song, and I shall figure out what to do ... and what
not to do. [exhales] Is it ok?

[After some consideration]

[indifferent] All right.
Perfect! Let us settle this, musically.
[indifferent] Yes, all right, musically.

[PLUTO sits down on the bench, chin in hand, while PLUT and LUTO prepare to sing]
[Enters music: Pa-pa-papagena, an opera duet in The Magic Flute, by Mozart]

[Having finished the excerpt, PLUT and LUTO disappear from stage. The lighting and the mood
of the scene become normal again. PLUTO regains consciousness from his contemplation]

[smiles to himself] Pa-pa-papa ... [stands up from the bench, exhales]

[Light fades out]
SCENE THREE

[Now a huge road sign that reads “Samaritan Street” hangs at the background]

[SOPHIE, with her weighty backpack and her heavy accent, arrives at the city but seems to have got lost. She is looking for directions]

SOPHIE: Excuse me, miss, can you …

[PASSER-BY A pretends that she doesn’t see and thus evades, but is later forced to respond]

PASSER-BY A: I’m in a hurry … [dodges]
SOPHIE: Sorry … [murmurs to herself] … wow, what a busy place … [then notices another passer-by]
SOPHIE: Excuse me, gentleman, could you show me the way to Samaritan Square?
PASSER-BY B: [looks away from his smart phone] Oh, my pleasure.
SOPHIE: It’s very kind of you.
PASSER-BY B: [self-assuring] Look, this is Samaritan Street, and Samaritan Square should be nearby. Just give me a moment. [PASSER-BY B works on his smart phone, trying to locate the spot with Google map] … ok … Samaritan Street … Samaritan Square … [he keeps on murmuring to himself, thumbing over the phone, looks busy, serious and hilarious] … a moment please … um … Samaritan Square … [he speaks to the phone and repeats several times with various tones and pitches] Oh … I’m using the voice function of the phone. It may take a few moments … [looking hilarious, he speaks to the phone again, keeps on murmuring to himself, and now starts to wave the phone to the sky] … perhaps something’s wrong with the reception … the 3G signal is rather weak in this area … um … [he still looks busy, serious and hilarious with the gadget]
SOPHIE: [gets impatient, embarrassed] Well … it’s really very kind of you … I’m sorry to be bothering you, but … but I think I’ll be alright … thanks … [wants to leave]
PASSER-BY B: Are you sure? Just give me another moment, and I’ll show you the way to Samaritan Square.
SOPHIE: [embarrassed] I’ll be fine, thank you. Really. Thank you.
PASSER-BY B: Alright, then. Enjoy your trip here.
SOPHIE: Thank you.

[PASSER-BY B finally lets go of SOPHIE, still busy speaking to his gadget, hilarious]

[PASSER-BY C sneaks in, bumps into SOPHIE]
PASSER-BY C: [upon clashing] Oh, can I help you?
SOPHIE: Oops, sorry. Oh, yes, I’m looking for Samaritan Square.
PASSER-BY C: [crafty] Oh, Samaritan Square! It’s just a few minutes’ walk from here. [scheming] I’ll show you there. [secretively winks at PASSER-BY D] Come with me.
SOPHIE: Thank you very much, sir.

[PASSER-BY C leads SOPHIE to nowhere, intending only to prey on her. Meanwhile, PASSER-BY D approaches and, joined by PASSER-BY C with some clever tricks, rips open SOPHIE’s backpack and snatches a few items from there and runs off]

PASSER-BY C: [abruptly stops] Oh, will you excuse me? I’ve got a phone call to answer. [fetches his cell phone from his pocket and makes up a fake conversation with no one over the phone, dramatic] Hello? Hi, yes, I am. Oh, Tamina! How’s everything, Tamina? Uh-huh … Fine, I’m fine. Everything’s great. Yes. So, what’s going on over there, Tamina? Uh-huh … Oh, really? Cool. Yes, yes … [covers up the phone and whispers to SOPHIE] Sorry, it’s an important call. I’ll be back soon. Wait here, ok? [with a phony apology, PASSER-BY C continues with his fake dialogue, and meanwhile drifts away into the far end and gradually disappears]

[Being polite, SOPHIE distances herself from PASSER-BY C, not noticing that she has been robbed and that PASSER-BY C has already vanished from sight]

[Enters PLUTO, he notices SOPHIE]

PLUTO: Hey, miss, your backpack is unzipped.
SOPHIE: Oh, really? Thanks. [notices her belongings have been stolen] Oh, my goodness … what happened? [starts fidgeting] where is my passport? Where is my purse?
PLUTO: Are you ok, miss? Have you lost anything?
SOPHIE: [still rummaging her backpack, mad] it must be the two strangers … they were together … shame on them … oh, here is my passport … [relieved] thank goodness … I think I’ve only lost some money …
PLUTO: Would you like to report to the police?
SOPHIE: Well … no, thanks …
PLUTO: I can help.
SOPHIE: Well … forget it … it’s only money … [tidies up her backpack]
PLUTO: It won’t be a lot of trouble.
SOPHIE: [gets ready again] No, thanks. I’m on my way to Samaritan Square. Thank you. Do you know how to get there?
PLUTO: Are you traveling here? You have a foreign accent.
SOPHIE: Yes, and I’m coming for Samaritan Square. So … can you show me how to
PLUTO: Me? Yes, of course. [thinks for a short while, looks for the road sign] This is Samaritan Street, ok?

SOPHIE: Ok.

PLUTO: [starts babbling and gesturing, animated] So, first of all, take this direction and go down the street, walk until you see a supermarket on your right. You will see an orange rubbish bin in front of the supermarket. Probably you will see some stray dogs too. Anyway. Now, cross the road, keep to the left and go straight down two blocks and stop at the bank. Bend over to the backdoor and cut through the gas station and between the cyber café and the sushi bar there is a subway, get into the subway and go out of it at exit C and you will arrive at a car park. Turn around and walk past the long line of bicycles and go under the row of sycamore trees, and [breathes] voila, Samaritan Square.

SOPHIE: [overwhelmed] ... Thank ... thank you ...

PLUTO: Can you remember all these? Don’t worry; it’s actually nearer than it sounds.

SOPHIE: Well ... I ... I’m not sure ...

PLUTO: [stretches his hand] Maybe I can walk you there.

SOPHIE: Oh, no, no, no, thanks, really, I will manage ... [brightens up] well, adventure! This is the great thing about being a backpacker, isn’t it? Adventure.

PLUTO: Very true. Adventure.

SOPHIE: Yeah, adventure ... [curious] oh ... how come you are so familiar with the directions here? I’ve asked a few people and they ...

PLUTO: [proud] I know this place like the back of my hand. I grew up here and I live here. I’ve never traveled. I spend all my life here. I am a postman and a postman knows his city. I need no Google map. [points at his head, proudly] The map is right here.

SOPHIE: [excited] So you are a postman? Are you kidding? I’ve always wanted to talk to a postman. You know, they all look mysterious because they never talk; [jokes] and I often wonder why they should be quiet for their job. [admiringly] Yet, they always make me feel like they are most reliable people in the world. You can just count on them. They are the best kind of people you can ever imagine.


SOPHIE: So, Mr. Postman, are you having your day off today?

PLUTO: [hesitates] Well ... not really ...

SOPHIE: But you are not wearing any uniform ... Or are you working undercover, like a policeman?

PLUTO: [pauses, embarrassed, upset] Not really ... I mean ... I was a postman ... I was ... [smiles bitterly] well, anyway, I hope you will find your way to Samaritan Square, I hope you will enjoy your trip here.

SOPHIE: Thanks, you’ve been very helpful!

PLUTO: Oh, did you say you’ve lost some money?
SOPHIE: [glances at her backpack] Actually, quite an awful lot of money …
PLUTO: You sure you don’t want to call the police?
SOPHIE: Never mind … [being cheerful] I’ll be alright.
PLUTO: [searches his box of personal belongings] Then, take this, here is some money. [hands over an envelop] A backpacker needs money for an adventure.
SOPHIE: No, I can’t take your money.
PLUTO: Yes, why not?
SOPHIE: But I hardly know you.
PLUTO: Oh please … I’ve had a bad enough day. Do me a favor, please. Take this money. Let me do some good.
SOPHIE: Well …
PLUTO: [begs] Please …
SOPHIE: Ok … so … how can I thank you? Well, can I do you a favor in return?
PLUTO: What?
SOPHIE: You’ve done me a favor! Can I do something for you? Anything?
PLUTO: [amused by the idea] Ah-ha … all right … um … you are going to Samaritan Square.
SOPHIE: Yes.
PLUTO: So I guess you must be getting there to visit that wall.
SOPHIE: Exactly, that famous wall!
PLUTO: Write a note for me, then, if you want to do me a favor. Post a note on the wall for me. Will you?
SOPHIE: [unsure] You mean this is what I can do for you?
PLUTO: Will it be too much trouble?
SOPHIE: [glad] Of course not. I’ll post a note on the wall for you. Promise.
PLUTO: Ha-ha. Thank you.
SOPHIE: No, thank you. [shows the envelop with money] Thank you very much.
PLUTO: [smiles] No, no. [sincere] Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Light fades out]
SCENE FOUR

[Now a huge road sign that reads “Samaritan Square” hangs at the background. The huge wall-of-letters is standing on one side of the stage. Letters and notes can be seen posted on the wall, where several BACKPACKERS are gathering. With a travel guide, SOPHIE eventually makes her way to her destination]

SOPHIE: [panting, exhilarated] Oh, there you are! Thank goodness! There you are!

[BACKPACKERS are busy writing their notes and posting them onto the wall, with a lot of hustle and bustle]

SOPHIE: [gets closer to the crowd, murmurs to herself] What an amazing place!
BAC-PAC A: Oh, hi, there!
SOPHIE: Hi!
BAC-PAC B: Come and join us. [refers to the wall] Look, isn’t this breath-taking?
SOPHIE: It’s awesome.
BAC-PAC A: Where are you from? You know, I’ve traveled all the way from Australia to this little town, just to visit this wonderful wall.
BAC-PAC C: I’ve traveled to so many cities and I bet this is the most unique architecture I’ve ever seen. Oh, by the way, I’m from Japan.
BAC-PAC A: Look at the letters here. I think there are hundreds of them.
BAC-PAC B: Yeah, letters from all over the world. Look, [poking his nose into the wall] this is from Brazil and that, from France, oh, France!
BAC-PAC A: So, I guess you’ve heard of the stories about this famous wall?
SOPHIE: Of course. This is why I am here. [takes out her travel guide, flipping to the right page] The travel guide says that [reads from her travel guide] “… the wall-of-letters is one of the most popular tourist icons here. Every year, thousands of people…”
BAC-PAC B: [snatches the guide from SOHPIE, reads aloud] “… thousands of people from all over the world come to visit this 500-year-old landmark, believing that…”
BAC-PAC C: [snatches the guide from BAC-PAC B] “… believing that once their letters are stuck into the wall, their trouble will be gone and their wish will come true …”
BAC-PAC A: How romantic …
BAC-PAC B: That’s why we are all here. A pilgrimage for every traveler.
BAC-PAC C: So, have you written up your letter?
SOPHIE: Me? Well, nope. I haven’t written anything for myself. [recalls] But I’ve promised a postman to deliver a letter here. [searches her backpack]
BAC-PAC A: Oh, that’s interesting, to deliver a letter for a postman!
SOPHIE: Yeah, I promised. I met him on my way here. He’s a real gentleman.
BAC-PAC C: Then, you were really lucky. The local people I’ve met so far are not very friendly.
BAC-PAC B: [teases] Shut up, you don’t seem very friendly yourself …
BAC-PAC A: Come on, stop babbling about the people. Get your letter on the wall!

[BACKPACKERS start fixing their letters on the wall]

BAC-PAC B: [peeps] So, what have you written?
BAC-PAC C: What about you? [teases] Some long lost dream that has never come true?
BAC-PAC B: [bothered] Oh, get away and mind your own business.
BAC-PAC A: [to SOPHIE, who is writing the note for PLUTO] Hey, come over, lady, there's still room over here.
SOPHIE: Yes? Thanks. [slowly draws closer but hesitates, just before she puts her letter on the wall] Oh, wait ... Can I add a few more words at the bottom?
BAC-PAC C: Sure, go ahead.
BAC-PAC B: [joking] But don't be too greedy, young lady ...

[While BACKPACKERS are trying to stick their letters onto the wall, making some jubilant noises, SOPHIE steps back, carefully penning her last remarks at the bottom of her letter]

[Then everyone freezes. Light gradually dims down. Enters the sound of the ticking clock]
[Spotlight in. Enter PLUT, with its giant fork, and LUTO, its ukulele]

PLUT: Hell-lo, hell-lo, hell-lo, it's me again!
LUTO: Good heavens, it's us again!
PLUT: Well, never mind.
LUTO: So, we are here again.
PLUT: It's time to read again, of course.
LUTO: Oh, yes, the wall-of-letters.
PLUT: So, who is going to read first this time?
LUTO: As a messenger of goodness, I would say: after you.
PLUT: [mocks] Hell, not again! Don't you think it's boring to be nice all the time?
LUTO: [moves towards the wall and fetches the first letter] Oh, money trouble, that's the most boring kind of trouble ...

PLUT: Well ... [clears its throat, reads from the letter] “Dear wall, I've come all the way for just one request: Make me rich. Sebastian, from Spain”. Oh, money trouble, that's the most boring kind of trouble ...

LUTO: It's boring ... but ... maybe ... maybe he's going through some real financial crisis ... for heaven's sake ... help in some way ...

PLUT: Uh ... this is how you spoil them.
LUTO: What about this? [fetches the second letter] ... “To whom this may concern, my grandmother is getting old, she seems to be forgetting everything. Can you make her young again? Faithfully yours, Betty, from Scotland”.

PLUT: [laughs] Silly girl, getting young again? Are you joking?
LUTO: Come on, don't be rude! It's a humble wish from a little girl.
PLUT: [mocks] It's a humble wish from a little girl ... [snobbish] I guess I know what this is all about ... it's either money matters or love matters again ... oh, it's a short one ... [fetches the third letter, reads, then turns gloomy] “We can't have a baby. It's been so many years but we cannot have a baby. If there is a God above, tell us what to do ...”

LUTO: You see, the letter is short, but their trouble can be long ...

PLUT: [forces a smile] Ah-ha ... trouble ... so ... oh ... what about that young lady over there? [curious] She seems to be finishing her letter ... [goes fetch the fourth letter] wow, this is much longer. She must be having some long long troubles ... [shows it to LUTO]

LUTO: Oh, it's really a long one. Are you going to read it?

PLUT: Oh, hell, it's ... it's your turn now!

LUTO: Of course. Of course. [clears its throat, swallows, steadily] “I'm not writing this for myself. I have promised to write this for a postman. I barely know him. But I can see from his face that he is having some trouble. Trouble that matters. Trouble that others may not understand. So, please help him, whatever trouble he is having, because he has been good and kind to a total stranger.”

PLUT: [coughs violently] ... Well ...

LUTO: Are you all right?

PLUT: Well ... this is unusual ...

LUTO: Unusual because it's beautiful?

PLUT: I don't know ...

LUTO: Hey, the letter isn't over yet.

PLUT: Can you continue?

LUTO: Sure ... oh no ... [refers to the bottom part of the note] the words are getting smaller ... [rub its eyes] ... I can't read her handwriting at the bottom.

PLUT: Well ... [hesitates] can I ... can I help?

LUTO: [surprised] ... Yes ... Yes, of course. Well ... please ... [hands over the note]

PLUT: [smiles, embarrassed] Let me see ... oh ... that's it ... [smiles again, then reads delicately, pointing word by word] “P.S. make me good, make me good like the postman.”

[Light fades out]

[Amidst the darkness and the silence, the sound of the ticking clock continues for a few more moments, then abruptly stops, followed by the music of Pa-pa-papagena, an opera duet in The Magic Flute, by Mozart]

[Curtain call]
“A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.”

Colin Powell
Dear Chris,

Hello! I am one of your new classmates, Nam. It’s really nice to meet you! I want to introduce myself to you.

My full name is Chung Hiu Nam, my friends usually call me Nam. I’m now 12 years old. My birthday is on 17th March. I live in Kwun Tong with my parents and domestic helper. I like singing and I enjoy going cycling with my friends on weekends. I like sweets the most. Every time I eat them, I feel happy and contented.

My dad is a Customs Officer, he is now 43 and he has been working for Hong Kong Customs for 20 years. My mum is an airline ground staff. She is now 43 and she’s been working for Cathay Pacific for 19 years. My dad likes playing computer games and singing. My mum likes watching Korean TV dramas and going shopping.

I study at Pui Ching Middle School and I am in class 1A. I like my class because most of the classmates are kind and they are easy to get along with. Whenever I have questions, they are willing to help me too!

My favourite subjects are Chinese and English, because both of them are daily changing and they are useful in travelling all around the world.

Our school is quite big and there are many plants in our campus. Hope you enjoy your new school life! I would like to be your friend and please feel free to ask me questions about our campus. I would like to know about Australia too!

Please write soon. I look forward to receiving your letter!

Lots of love,

Nam
It was so early in the morning when my alarm rang. I tried my best to open my eyes although I was still very tired. Surprisingly, I saw someone in front of me! He was a boy in green clothes and pointed ears and he looked exactly like Peter Pan! He said, ‘Hi, I am Peter Pan. Nice to meet you! I have sprinkled some dust on you so you can fly. However, the power just lasts for one day. Enjoy!’ Then, while I was still staring at him with my mouth opened, he vanished into thin air.

I was in a mess. Actually, I didn’t know what had happened. Peter Pan sprinkled some dust on me? Did it mean I could fly? I could fly over the sea and fly over the countryside! I could go anywhere I wanted to go! I was so excited and more luckily, it was a holiday. My mom hadn’t woken up yet and I went out quietly.

It was such a wonderful day. I rushed into the sky and saw many different kinds of birds. The wind was so cool. I loved it very much. Then someone suddenly yelled, ‘Peter Pan!’ I looked back and saw a man wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a sharp metal hook. It was Captain Hook! I was so scared and I replied quickly, ‘Oh no! I am not Peter Pan! I am only a normal kid!’ Then he shouted, ‘Stop lying! A normal kid won’t fly.’ I replied, ‘It was because...’

He came towards me with his enormous pirate ship before I had finished my sentence. I was shocked and astonished. I couldn’t think of anything to do except escape quickly. Captain Hook and his pirates were chasing after me. I was so frightened but I knew that I couldn’t just continue escaping. I needed to attack him and fight him. I couldn’t be a cowardly boy. I turned back and took out my toy sword. At first, I was very brave. When I was fighting, I knew that it was not a game. It was true because I hurt a pirate. Captain Hook was so angry and used his hook to attack me. I immediately dodged and fell into the sea but he was coming after me. He wanted to kill me.

At that dangerous moment, I woke up and my whole body was wet. My mom was near me. I told her I saw Peter Pan and Captain Hook and I could fly. My mom said, ‘Oh, my lovely son! You were dreaming.’ I was shocked and asked my mom why I was so wet. My mom replied, ‘Hmm...hmm...because I couldn’t wake you up, I used water. Don’t talk anymore. Hurry up! Put on your uniform and go to school.’ I said, ‘But today is Sunday!’ My mom yelled, ‘Today is Monday! Be quick!’

Oh no!
Dear Thang,

I am glad that you have sent me a letter. I’m thirteen years old and I love swimming a lot. I must admit that I’m a bit jealous that you live near a beach so you can go swimming every day for free! My favourite colours are green, brown and yellow. I live with my mom, dad and sister in Hong Kong. My mom is a housewife and she knows a lot of things about cooking and house cleaning, just like your grandma. My dad works as an IT technician and he knows a lot about computer systems. My sister is a university student now and she’s in Canada.

Hong Kong is a busy place but I think you can feel happy if you live here. There are a lot of shopping malls, many tall buildings and large open spaces of countryside. I do like the city. It’s fun to live here. Whenever you want to go somewhere that’s far from your house, you can go to any bus stop or metro station and then you can reach your destination. It’s easy and time-saving.

I usually do homework, study and chat with my family and friends after school. Sometimes, I don’t like to go to school but sometimes I do! I don’t know why but maybe everyone else feels the same way.

I’m not sure if this is very useful but I hope the following advice can help you get a better result!
1. Attend your classes regularly. Then you won’t miss the important things on the day.
2. Do your homework daily; practice makes perfect.
3. Ask for help when you need it; don’t leave it behind.
4. Manage your time effectively; it helps you focus on studying.
5. Always review; after school you should review what you have learned that day.

Thanks for sharing with me things about yourself and I hope you have a great time with your grandma in the days to come.

Best regards,

Jasmine
It was so early in the morning when my alarm rang. I tried my best to open my eyes although I was still very tired. Surprisingly, I saw someone in front of me! He was a boy in green clothes and pointed ears and he looked exactly like Peter Pan! He said, ‘Hi, I am Peter Pan. Nice to meet you! I have sprinkled some dust on you so you can fly. However, the power just lasts for one day. Enjoy!’ Then, while I was still staring at him with my mouth opened, he vanished into thin air. I chased after him immediately, and to my surprise, I could fly!

I was very happy about my new power and decided to travel around the world. First, I flew to Japan because I wanted to see the biggest and newest Gundam in the world. Then, I felt hungry and tired so I went to eat sushi for lunch. Everyone was staring at me because of my power. My next stop was London because I wanted to find out how tall the London Bridge was.

After travelling around the world, I wanted to explore the universe. I flew to the moon and saw a beautiful Chinese lady and a rabbit. They told me that they were bored, so I gave them my smartphone and taught them how to play Candy Crush. They enjoyed the game very much. After a while, I waved goodbye to them and promised to bring some mooncakes to them next time. I continued my adventure and unbelievably, I saw my hero ‘Thunderman’ on a planet. He was arguing with his brother and Thunderman was so angry that he started to fight with his brother. Thunderman used his fist to hit the sky and a powerful thunder appeared. Unluckily, I was hit by the thunder and fell back to Earth.

I kept on falling and eventually landed in my classroom. At that moment, I felt that someone was hitting me. Then I woke up and saw my Maths teacher shouting at me. “Wake up! Johnny!” It was all a dream and I was ordered by my Maths teacher to stand outside the classroom as punishment.
Dear Thang,

I am happy to receive your letter. Thank you for telling me about your life in Vietnam. It is my pleasure to sponsor a child like you. This time, I am writing to tell you about my family.

I am a twelve-year-old boy and I live with my parents and grandparents in Hong Kong. I am the only son in my family. My parents and grandparents love me much.

Hong Kong is located in the South of China. There are many places for you to shop, eat, play and enjoy yourself such as the Ocean Park, shopping centres and a lot of restaurants. I like Hong Kong very much because there are many different kinds of cuisines like Chinese food, Korean food, Japanese food and even Vietnamese food. Although there are many famous sightseeing places in Hong Kong, it is very convenient to get around the city because there are many types of public transport available, like buses, mini-buses and trains.

In my spare time, I like to chat with friends in some online social platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, and so on. Also, I will chat with my family members. On Saturdays or Sundays, I usually have a family gathering with them, during which we have a whole-day trip in Hong Kong. My schoolwork is a little bit difficult, but I love to go to school because I can meet my friends. If you want to learn successfully, you need to read more books. This is my suggestion for you.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Love,
Marcus
It was so early in the morning when my alarm rang. I tried my best to open my eyes although I was still very tired. Surprisingly, I saw someone in front of me! He was a boy in green clothes and pointed ears and he looked exactly like Peter Pan! He said, ‘Hi, I am Peter Pan. Nice to meet you! I have sprinkled some dust on you so you can fly. However, the power just lasts for one day. Enjoy!’ Then, while I was still staring at him with my mouth opened, he vanished into thin air.

After Peter Pan vanished, I walked into the toilet feeling confused. I tried to test whether I could really fly by jumping up. To my surprise, it worked! I was very excited and went back to my room to fetch a funny costume. I put on a black moustache, a sharp metal hook, a broad-brimmed hat and some fine clothes. This was the costume that I used in a performance at the school festival. Then I flew out to the bank and flew into the rear entrance and took two bags of money. Then I used the money to bring my sister to Disneyland. We were very happy. At night, I turned on the TV and watched the news. The police said that some money in the bank had been stolen. I was scared. They showed the photo of a man with black moustache, and I knew that it was me.

Later when darkness veiled the whole town, while everyone was sleeping, I flew out of my window. I tried to find the bank to return the money, but it was too dark and I could not see well. Besides, I was very hungry. I saw a bakery shop and I flew inside to try to steal some bread. Suddenly, I saw two shadows in front of the moon. I looked carefully. It was Captain Hook and Peter Pan. They were fighting! Surprisingly Captain Hook was flying too.

‘Help!’ cried Peter Pan, ‘Captain Hook has hurt my leg!’

I quickly ran into the kitchen of the bakery and picked up a pan. I threw it towards Captain Hook and he fell. Peter Pan flew to me and said, ‘Thanks! But why are you here with those two heavy bags?’ So I told him what I had done.
Peter Pan then told me that Captain Hook stole his dust and how Captain Hook had injured his leg. Suddenly I had a great idea. I took the dust from inside Captain Hook’s bag and swapped it with the money. I flew back home with Peter Pan and he promised to bring me to Neverland next time to thank me while I promised never to steal again.

The following morning, I turned on the TV as usual and it said that a man with a black moustache had been caught. The man was sleeping outside the bakery and was caught in the early morning. I laughed at once because I knew who he was, and no one knew what really happened except Peter Pan and me.
Happiness is playing with friends happily.

Happiness is spending time with family.

Happiness is going on a trip.

Happiness is... 

Happiness is dancing in the rain.

Happiness is having picnic on a plain.

Happiness is chatting with friends.

Happiness is... 

Happiness is enjoying air-conditioning on a summer day.

Happiness is having ice-cream in May.

Happiness is going to school on weekdays.

Happiness is... 

Happiness is fantastic!
Charlotte is my name.

Happy and joyful.

Art is the subject I am fond of.

Rolling on the floor when hearing funny things

Lemonade is the drink I like best.

Orange is my lucky colour.

Teaching is my dream job.

Tearing the sofa is what I like to do most.

Easter is my favourite holiday.
Eldrid is my name

Love to play board games

Dictation is what I like

Rather than doing homework at night

Imagine my father is a superman

Defeat all the enemies

Save the Earth and the Universe

Oh my God! It’s just my dream.
Dear Chris,

Hello, I am Ho. Jacky introduced you to me as a new friend last week. I hope to know more about you. Also, I’d like to let you know more about me.

My name is Long Ho Yuen and I am thirteen years old. My birthday is 28\textsuperscript{th} December. I am living in a housing estate in Kwun Tong. My hobbies are reading and playing basketball. I am very proud of my talent as I can remember ten things at a time.

There are three members in my family including Dad, Mum and I. My parents are civil servants. My dad likes to play TV games and my mum likes sports. Dad has many interesting comics at home and I like to read his detective comics very much.

I am studying in class 1B of Pui Ching Middle School. I like my class very much because my classmates and teachers are kind. My favourite subject is Science because I like to do experiments. I am also a member of the Computer Club. It is one of my favourite extra-curricular activities.

Last Friday, during the English lesson, my teacher asked us to write a poem about ourselves. It is called a Bio Poem.

\begin{verbatim}
Ho
Humble, studious, creative, intelligent
Sibling of no one
Lover of my parents
Who feels lonely at home
Who needs more time to play TV games
Who gives his heart to his parents
Who fears tests and exams
Who would like to create a video game
A resident of Hong Kong
Yuen
\end{verbatim}

Do you like my poem? I look forward to receiving your letter soon.

Best regards,
Ho
A Day in Sunshine Zoo

1B Ryan Siu

Last weekend, Mum, Dad, my little brother and I went to a famous zoo, Sunshine Zoo. At first, we were so excited when we reached the zoo, but when we saw the long queue at the entrance, we were all shocked. “It seems that we will have to wait for a long time to buy the tickets,” Mum said. While we were queuing, my little brother became impatient, so I bought a lollipop for him.

After twenty minutes, we finally got the tickets. We went into the zoo and visited many animals, including pandas, lions, tiger, etc. I was so happy because I took lots of beautiful photographs of them. I really liked the fat and cute sleeping pandas, and also the stripes on the tigers’ skin. These animals were so unique.

After that, we visited the monkeys. They were active and mischievous. They always climbed inside the cage. While we were watching the monkeys, we suddenly found the cage door was open. One of the monkeys escaped its cage and grabbed my little brother’s lollipop. “Don’t take it, please?” begged my little brother. Of course, the monkey ignored him and ran away. My little brother became sad and started crying. “Don’t cry, my dear brother,” I said. Mum and Dad decided to chase after the monkey to get the lollipop back.

After searching, the zoo staff came back holding a tiny cage with the monkey inside. “We apologize for disturbing you,” said the staff. Although the monkey was caught, the lollipop was lost, so I bought my little brother an ice-cream instead. He became happy again.

We enjoyed our day at the zoo very much. I won’t forget the special experience there!
School is a warm family.

School is full of joy.

School is a colourful rainbow.

School is my home!

School is a fantastic heaven.

School is full of kindness.

School is a treasure.

School is a good friend!

School is our dream.

School is full of memories.

School is growth.

School is true love!

School is my life!
One day, I was on my way home happily because my cousin had come to my home to play with me. Suddenly, time stopped, my watch had stopped, the pedestrians were frozen in mid-stride, except me. I felt strange there; there was nothing more than that. I was in a strange mood when I heard someone running towards me. To my surprise, they were Mario and Luigi! They were all exhausted and they said," An... Anson, you're the first one who has reached here! In the past, only dead people could come here. As you are out of our imagination, please visit our country as a gift." “Sure! I’m your big fan!”

As their words drifted into the air, Mario and Luigi quickly brought me to their "Mushroom World" where they were born.

I opened my eyes, "Oh! What a nice place it is!" There was green grass and flowers, there were also trees along the path we went passed.

At last, I arrived at Peach’s Castle. It was very big and well decorated. Mario and Luigi finally brought me to a large room, which was even better than the dining room. I saw Browser, who was the villain in the Mario game. Mario said, "Hi, my brother. This is Anson, who has travelled through time to come here. He is the first human who can do this! I’m very proud of him!" “What? A time traveller? It is mysterious!” Browser replied with so many questions. Although I told him it was just by accident, he didn’t really believe me.

After having some tea, they went hunting with me. Mario showed me some special species of plants, such as the "Fire Flowers", the "Iced Flowers" as well as the "Big Mushroom". He said if they ate those plants, they would be energized and upgraded with shields and skills. He also said that if it was not for emergency, I should not eat the "Big Mushroom", because I might get heart disease! He also taught me how to hunt – the easiest way was to jump onto the animals, but the most difficult one was to bump into the animals, but I did them all accurately.
"It is time to prepare our dinner!" Luigi announced. "But I want to play here." I moaned. "Okay. When we are ready, we will call you." Mario replied. As they left, time stopped again, the animals had stopped, and my watch had stopped, too. When I closed my eyes ...

I travelled back to the future. I'd gone back to my home. The TV was on with a Mario Wii game, in which Mario and Luigi were walking around worriedly ...
My Terrible First Love

1C Jacky Cheung

One day, when I was on my way home, someone walked into me. When I was just about to shout at her, I found that she looked so beautiful. Her beauty made me fall in love with her at first sight. She had clear, blue eyes, rosy cheeks, red lips with a beautiful face that looked like Snow White. Suddenly, a flash of light came out and I suddenly fell into a mysterious place.

As I opened my eyes, I saw the pretty girl standing beside me and she told me that her name was Mary, whose grandma was Snow White. I was in a place that was in the sky. Also, she told me that her grandma forced her to go on a date. If she couldn’t meet any man before the deadline, something terrible would happen. Luckily, the magic mirror told her that she could look for people on the land, so she brought me to this place and wanted to invite me to dance with her at the ball.

When I arrived at the venue, I saw many characters, such as Batman, Mario, Winnie the Pooh and so on. They all looked handsome and cute. At the ball, I tried to dance my best. However, I stepped on Mary’s feet many times. After the ball, I asked her if she could be my girlfriend, but she said that although she looked young, her real age was 100 years old because they came from fairy tales.

Suddenly, the flash of light came again and I realized I was lying on the street. And I felt sad because my first love had broken my heart.
One day, when I was on my way home after school, someone walked up to me. It was Jace Wayland. He had dark blond hair and golden eyes. He had a slim, muscular build. He was covered in thin, silver scars from years of applying various magical runes with a stele for battle and healing purposes. I felt unbelievable and surprised when I saw him!

Suddenly, there was a big bang and it scared me. Jace was cursing. He rushed to a house that was on fire with a seraph blade in his hand. I followed him immediately and looked at the house. The house was on fire; grey smoke was going up to the sky.

When we got there, people were screaming and running away. Jace and I ran into the house. He took his witchlight rune-stone out—it always brings you light. Now, the house wasn’t dark anymore, it was bright for us even if there was no light coming in from the window. Suddenly, the door blew outward. It almost knocked me off my feet. There was a demon! It’s like a giant from fairy tales, as big as a truck, and it’s covered with slime. “Gross!” I uttered. Jace had the seraph blade in his hand. He raised it, calling out, “Sansavi!” The blade was bright and gleaming. Jace flung the seraph blade at the demon; it stuck in the creature’s chest. I broke the window and sunlight came in. The demon screamed and staggered back. Its skull crumpling like burning paper, and it vanished entirely.

Jace looked at me. He was very thankful for what I did, so he gave me a witchlight rune-stone. I was very happy. And he used the Portal to go back to Idris – where he lived for his duty.
An Evening with Sherlock Holmes

1C Katie Tsang

This story happened a long long time ago. One day, when I was on my way home after school, someone walked up and talked to me, I was in a shock because the man who talked to me was Sherlock Holmes.

Holmes told me that he needed my help. I was very happy to be appreciated by him, but I did not think I could help him, so I declined his invitation. At that time I decided to go. Holmes then told me that he could tell me more stories about him, but the condition was that I needed to help him, so I promised him.

He brought me to the year 1888 in London. He told me that there was a killer named Jack the Ripper. He hoped that I could help him to arrest Jack the Ripper because he had used a knife to kill five women.

At that moment, I heard a woman scream. We went there and looked, I screamed because another woman had just been killed by Jack the Ripper. Holmes pulled me up and followed the killer quickly but we still couldn’t find him. Suddenly I felt that someone was behind me. I turned and saw Jack the Ripper! He wanted to kill me. I screamed loudly and then I heard a gunshot, I closed my eyes and cried. After a minute, I opened my eyes and saw Jack the Ripper was dead. Holmes killed him, and I was happy about it.

After the incident, Holmes told me the story about him. I was very happy. Holmes gave his football to me for memory and sent me back to the present to make my way home.

I hope that I will see him again one day and have another adventure together.
Dear Jenny,

Long time no see. How are you? I know that you have transferred to a new girls’ school on Hong Kong Island. How are you getting on in your new school? Is it very different from a co-educational school like Pui Ching?

I was so unlucky this summer holiday. I got a terrible viral disease, so my parents brought me to the hospital. But the medicine that the doctor gave me didn’t work, so I was admitted to the hospital again when my situation worsened. This time, the doctor was so worried about my condition that he thoroughly examined and x-rayed me. After all the tests were done, he told me that I had to stay hospitalized for the next few weeks because I was diagnosed with pneumonia. So I ended up spending all my summer holidays in the hospital. How poor I am. What about you? Did you go somewhere exciting in the summer holidays? I hope you had a wonderful time.

School has just started. Coming back to school, I have mixed feelings. On one hand, I feel happy because most of my primary school friends are in the same class with me this year. But on the other hand, I am a bit scared because I am worried that my English and Maths may lag behind others. Many of them speak beautiful English and a lot of them score high in Maths quizzes, so I think I need to read more English books and do more Maths exercises. Anyway, I am quite excited about the new school year. Reading the school calendar, I was amazed by the wide variety of school functions like the Drama Nights, the Junior Form Music Concert, the Training Camp and the Athletic Meet we have. I am enthusiastic about singing and performing on stage so I think I will take part in the musical and the drama competition if I am chosen.

You know what! We have a great class teacher this year. She is called Miss Wong. She is very nice and funny. She used a humorous way to remind us not to daydream during the assembly and the life education lessons. We all love her very much.

Well, you know, something really crazy happened one day after PE lesson. I was rushing back to my classroom to take the file for the Computer Studies lesson. On my way back to the classroom, I came across a strange senior form student who was...
wandering along the corridor barefoot. He said that someone had taken his shoes, so he didn’t have any shoes to wear. When he had left to continue his search for his missing shoes, I couldn’t help laugh. How come he didn’t know who had taken his shoes? He should have been wearing them all morning.

Do you like your new school? Did something interesting happen in your class? I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Love,

Chris
Happiness is when someone smiles at me.

Happiness is getting an apple from the tree.

Happiness is having an ice-cream for free.

Happiness is...

Happiness is making a new friend.

Happiness is when examinations end.

Happiness is joining the school band.

Happiness is...

Happiness is getting a surprise suddenly.

Happiness is singing in the bathroom loudly.

Happiness is wearing a beautiful dress proudly.

Happiness is...

Happiness is having a sweet dream at night.

Happiness is being called smart and bright.

Happiness is getting all the answers right.

Happiness is …
Pui Ching Middle School
1D Ronnie Ng

Pui Ching is a big, big tree.

Under its shade, there stands you and me.

In Pui Ching, you are nurtured with love and care.

Come and join us, happy moments we will share.

Have fun at the playground in our campus.

In the gym you can train with all of us.

Now, jump into the pool, take off your shirt.

Go to the school garden and dance with the birds.
Dear Jenny,

How are you getting on in your new secondary school? I am so glad to receive your letter. It’s nice to hear from you.

I had a wonderful summer holiday this year. I visited Shanghai with my family last August. My younger brother and I had never been to Shanghai. We were impressed by the beautiful view of the Pudong skyline. We saw three skyscrapers and I took lots of pictures. We cruised along Huangpu River in one evening. The view was stunning. We also went shopping along the Nanjing Road. Of course, I didn’t forget you. I bought you a T-shirt in your favourite colour.

The new school year has just started. Unlike in the primary school, there are many student activities and school functions in Pui Ching Middle School. On one hand, I am excited but on the other hand, I am quite nervous. I am looking forward to joining the F.1 Training Camp because I heard that it is both challenging and meaningful. I hope I can learn how to be more independent and mature as well as how to take care of myself. You know, unlike you, I am not a sporty person, so I am not that interested in the Athletic Meets and the Swimming Gala. Without you, I guess I will be bored to death sitting in the spectator stand all day long. I wish you could be here with me. How about you? Have you taken part in the Athletic Meet of your new school?

So far, I enjoy all the lessons here with my new teachers. My favourite teacher is Miss Chan. She teaches us Chinese Literature and Music. She is tall and slim and she has short straight hair. She is caring and humorous. She always tells jokes during the lessons. That’s why we all like her and respect her.

Do you still remember Joyce, our primary three classmate? She happens to be in the same class with me this year. Yesterday, during the PE lesson, she broke her leg and was admitted to the hospital immediately. Unfortunately, she was seriously injured and she has to be hospitalized for the next two months. The teachers and all of us are very worried about her. Hope she will get well soon.

See you next month in our gathering. Write soon.

Cheers,

Chris

Chris
The Weekends
1D Tracy Cheung

Saturday is coming.
All the students are laughing.
Tutorial classes are approaching.
Unfinished homework is waiting.
Date your friends and go partying.
Run away from studying.
As free as a bird flying,
Yell and shout, ‘Morning!’

Sunday is coming.
Umm...Holiday mood is fading.
No! Everyone’s still yawning.
Daddy and Mummy, shall we go swimming?
Aren’t you two listening?
Yes or no? Is our family day ending?
When I was ten years old, I had a dream. I imagined I was a successful investor and ran my own company. The dream is still very clear in my mind today; unlike most dreams which I have forgotten, this one seems to have sunken its roots deep inside my brain.

During the years, most of my dreams haven’t changed. This dream about being a successful investor has become “grander”. Now I dream that I will be an extraordinary man, who won’t be forgotten through time, like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

My dreams mostly have not changed through time, just some of them have. It is like the difference between being a “good man” and a “great man”.

I have been learning much since I first got my dream. I have learned many stories, like Bill Gates who played computer games throughout the night. I have also learned about the history of many companies and how they got famous. They are my inspiration.

“Build a dream and the dream will build you.” It is certainly so true. I hope my dream will come true.
Dear Chris,

How do you do? My name is Kelly Lam. I was born on 12 January and I am twelve years old. I am interested in drawing and I love to draw during the holidays. I usually do homework and revision in the evenings. How about you? What do the people in Australia like to do during their leisure time?

There are 4 members in my family including my father, my mother, my younger brother and I. Though it isn’t a big family, I love my family very much and we are all happily living together. Both my father and my mother are teachers and they teach me a lot. I have learnt a lot from them and that’s why I am courageous, caring and cheerful. My brother is a Primary Four student. He is lovable but lazy. He is interested in playing with toy cars so there are many kinds of toy cars at home. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

I am a Form One student and I study in Pui Ching Middle School. I really love this school. My favourite subject is Chinese because it is interesting and meaningful. I have enrolled in a music course because I want to learn more about music and learn more musical instruments besides the piano. I hope to learn more useful things and make more friends at school. How is your school life in Australia?

Last Friday during English lesson, my teacher asked us to write a poem about ourselves. It’s called Bio Poem.

Kelly
Joyful, funny, fun-loving, quiet
Sibling of Sam Lam
Lover of funny ideas
Who feels happy at home all the time
Who needs more time and more freedom
Who gives all she can to her friends
Who fears to do dirty jobs
Resident of Hong Kong
Lam

Do you like my poem? I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,
Kelly
An Unforgettable Day in Sunshine Zoo

1E Kelly Lam

Last weekend, I went to Sunshine Zoo with my parents and my little brother. It was a sunny day. We went there because there were some special animals and there was a show that day.

We got up early in the morning and went there by bus. We thought that it would not be so crowded in the morning. However, when we arrived, we saw a lot of people waiting for buying the tickets at the entrance. We had been waiting for half an hour and we all felt tired and annoyed.

Finally, we got the tickets. First of all, we decided to see the monkeys. They were the special animals that we wanted to see. They were special because they were rare and they came from the South Pole. However, when we reached the monkey cage, we saw that they all looked sad. The cage was too small for them. Besides, the temperature was too high for the animals from the South Pole. I was disappointed as what I expected to see were some energetic monkeys playing in a much bigger cage. I sympathized with those monkeys very much. They are pitiful.

While I was thinking of how to help the monkeys, suddenly one of the monkeys escaped from the tiny cage and grabbed my little brother’s lollipop. It took less than 2 seconds and the monkey disappeared in the crowd. My brother squealed and cried loudly. Although my parents tried to comfort him at once, he was so scared that he kept crying.

Meanwhile, someone called the staff and they came to look into the situation. The monkey was hidden in the penguin area, which was as cold as the South Pole. At last, the staff caught it and put it back to the cage. In order to comfort my brother, I bought him an ice-cream. We were happy to see that he finally stopped crying. At last, we saw all the animals in the zoo and went home happily. What happened to us today is something I will never forget.
The Animals Gone Missing!

1E Wing Yip

Tom wanted to go to the zoo on a carefree weekend. However, he was depressed when he saw the sign--- “The zoo is temporarily closed.” In fact, it didn’t mean temporarily, it meant FOREVER! The wind blew strongly. The trees’ leaves shook. The gate clattered mysteriously. Things started to change as the autumn leaves swished up into the air. The wind continued blowing strong from the vast sea where the zoo was located right by.

Tom’s desire to visit the zoo was so strong that he decided to ignore the sign. His tiny body crawled under the gate without letting his parents at home know. He came to the area where all the animals lived. But there, he saw only empty cages! Every cage was empty! He was terrified and shocked. The lovely pandas, the enormous chimpanzees, the fierce lions, where were they?

Just as Tom was standing stiffly there, a dark shadow glided near. Tom dashes into the bushes and stared at the man in a black coat and jeans. The man treaded towards the shore by the zoo and whispered to the captain of a gigantic boat, “Sell the animals to Europe and we’ll all be rich!”

Things started to become vivid. This man had to be the one who captured all the animals and planned to sell them and become rich! All of a sudden, the police came. They must have also figured it out. It turned out the man was the zookeeper of the zoo. He controlled the whole zoo. Without the government’s permission, he wanted to sell all the animals and have the money. It was such an exciting adventure for Tim. As you might have already guessed --- Tom was the one who called the police.

The next day, the gate of the zoo opened wide to welcome the visitors. The sun shone brightly and the birds sang as Tom walked into the zoo again. Not for another adventure but to visit the animals he had rescued. Tom was wearing a proud smile on his face.
Dear Chris,

How are you? I know you from my friend Michael. He said you are a nice guy who lives in Australia. Do you enjoy living there?

My name is Anson Cheung Yik Hei. I live in Ho Man Tin in Hong Kong. I am a Form One student and study at Pui Ching Middle School. I love swimming and playing basketball with friends. I like to build Gundam models and Lego. I love to eat ice-cream and chocolate too! What do you like to eat?

There are three members in my family. They are my father, mother and I. Since I am the only child in my family, my father and mother can spend most of their time to be with me. I like to play TV games like Gundam Breaker and FIFA 13 with my father, and cook yummy meals with my mother. My family and I usually go to Japan on holidays. We all love the beautiful scenery and delicious Japanese cuisine there. My favourite Japanese Cuisine is sushi. Do you like to go to Japan?

My school is a busy school because all the students have to study many subjects and do lots of homework. We also have many dictations and tests. Even teachers need to check a lot of homework and mark test papers from time to time. Although we have lots of things to do, I still enjoy my school life. Moreover, do you know that your friend Michael is sitting next to me? We always play together in recesses and have lunch every day. This makes me enjoy my school life more! Can you tell me your school life in Australia? Is it as busy as ours?

Oh! It’s already 11:00 a.m. in Hong Kong! It’s time to sleep. Maybe talk to you later! I am waiting for your reply! Please give my best wishes to your family!

With Love,
Anson
A Day in the Zoo

1F Ethan Tsang

Yesterday, I went to Sunshine Zoo with my parents and brother by bus. We had waited at the entrance for half an hour before we got the tickets. With the hot burning sun and noisy environment, we felt very annoyed.

After waiting for half an hour, we could finally go inside. I bought a lollipop for my brother. And then we went to the monkey's cage immediately. My brother loves monkeys very much. However, we didn't feel happy. We were so disappointed in the monkeys' cage. It was crammed with monkeys. It was too tiny and the monkeys didn't have enough space to move.

When we were talking about the monkeys' sadness, one of the monkeys discovered my brother's lollipop and opened the door. It rushed out of the tiny cage and snatched the lollipop. My brother screamed and cried loudly. While Mom and I were trying to stop him crying, Dad went to tell the staff what had happened.

The staff started to chase the monkey all around in the zoo. The monkey was so tricky that it jumped around the bushes and swung across the tree to elude the staff. They spent an hour searching for the naughty monkey. Finally, the staff caught the monkey and put it into a cage. They were so sorry about that and apologized to us. They also promised that it would not happen again. I bought my brother an ice-cream and he was happy again.

Although we didn't have a happy trip, we got some free passes from the zoo as compensation. We hope we will have an interesting trip next time.
In my childhood, one piece of my kindergarten homework was to write an article about my dream. I remember I wrote about having a pleasant life in a lovely village, but it seems impossible to me now. Having a life without a job is impossible.

The dream I have recently is to be a boss in a shop and have a comfortable office. I will be drinking high-quality red wine and order a bunch of my staff to do this and that. This is kind of closer to reality, but still, it is challenging.

The difference between these dreams is being mature or not. They are both totally different. A dream that’s far from reality is definitely naïve. I guess my thinking is more mature now.

Before my dream comes true, I have to do some preparation. Studying hard and not giving up are two crucial keys towards fulfilling my dream. My dream is now pushing me towards them. I hope to have my dream come true. Dreams are great power and we must make use of its strength.
Healthy Eating Festival

2A Thomas Wong

Healthy Eating Festival is held on the first Friday of August every year. Living in a prosperous city like Hong Kong, we can enjoy different kinds of food. However, people in Hong Kong nowadays do not know how to make good food choices and are not eating healthily. The purpose of this festival is to raise their awareness about the importance of a healthy diet.

On this day, people are encouraged to eat healthy food and have a well-balanced diet such as eating more vegetables and fruit and while reducing their intake of meat, sugar and fat. They will also get discounts when they buy healthy food in supermarkets. People can also make some healthy food and share it with their relatives, friends and even neighbors. This aims to encourage people to cook healthy food and share the message of healthy eating with the people around them. Some people will choose to wear t-shirts or dresses which have ‘Be Healthy Eat Healthily’ written on them to create a festive mood.

In addition, a variety of activities and events about the importance of eating a well-balanced diet including exhibition, talks, workshops, and educational booths will be organized. Schools will also invite health professionals such as doctors and nutritionists to share healthy eating tips with students.

This festival aims at helping people understand the benefits of healthy eating. When people are healthy, they can enjoy their lives with happiness.
Something About Me

2A Vicky Li

My name is Li Vicky Theodora. I am thirteen years. I love my name very much. Theodora means the gift of God. It is a very meaningful name.

There are four members in my family - my father, my mother, my brother and me. My father is a professional engineer and my mother is a housewife. My brother is called Jenkin. He is twenty years old now. I have lived in Tseung Kwan O since I was born. My birthday is on 23th May. I celebrate every birthday with my family.

My interest is drawing, especially drawing the characters of Japanese manga. I have a drawing lesson every Wednesday. I also like Jazz dance. I learnt Jazz dance every Friday when I was in Form one. Although I don’t learn dancing anymore, I still join some dancing activities when I am free. Watching animations is my favourite hobby. I usually watch animations after I finish all my homework and revision. I feel relaxed after watching animations!

When I grow up, I want to be a pet groomer because I love animals very much. I especially love dogs. My favourite dog is a Pomeranian. I hope I can have one when I grow up.
Introduction
Over the past two weeks our group has been doing an in-depth investigation on one of the many unusual festivals around the world – the Songkran Water Festival. Today we will unlock the mysteries of this festival. We will achieve this by examining four key areas: Background, Time, Location and Rituals.

Background
The name Songkran actually comes from a Sanskrit word implying ‘passing’ or ‘approaching’. There is a myth that talks of the Nagas, mythical serpents, who bring rain to a region by spouting water. The more the water they spout, the more the rain will fall. To ensure there is plenty of rain, and to also thank the gods, the Thai people hold this event every year. Therefore, this is actually a religious festival and not merely a festival to entertain the people.

Obviously, the main feature of the festival is water and the use of water not only shows the Thai people’s gratitude to the gods but it symbolizes the washing away of all the bad things.

The main objective of the celebration is to pay respect to ancestors, elders and gods. Another purpose is to show mercy and to cleanse the participants of bad luck.

Location
The festival originates from Thailand. It is also celebrated in the neighboring countries of Laos and Cambodia. The most famous locations for the celebration are in cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Phuket.

Time
The Songkran Water Festival is celebrated at the time of the Lunar New Year in Thailand. The date was once based on the lunar calendar however the date is now fixed. It now officially runs for three days starting on April 13th and ending on April 15th.
Rituals
The most prominent activity is the water fights that take place on the streets. This appeals greatly to tourists who travel from all over the world to participate in this part of the festival. In this activity, everyone gets soaked and walks around the streets splashing other participants with buckets of water and water pistols. Besides the entertainment side of the festival, the event also contains a religious element – water is regarded as a symbol of religious purity, which is also thought to bring good luck and prosperity.

People also bathe an image of Buddha and sprinkle purifying water over it, signifying a gesture of respect. After that the Thais will bathe the chief Buddhist monk. They pour purifying water over him. He then changes into a dry robe and gives a sermon and bless those who attend the bathing ritual.

Young people pour scented water into the palms of the elders as a sign of respect and to seek blessings. They also present gifts, like betel nuts, which are symbols of hospitality. The older generation will sprinkle Acacia water and perfume on top of the youngsters’ heads to give them blessings. Some families visit their ancestors’ graves too as a token of respect for the New Year.
Dear Confused,

Thanks for your confidence and trust in me. In your letter, you mentioned that you fell in love with a boy. Also, you said that the boy was actually your best friend’s boyfriend. In addition, you claimed that you don’t want to upset your best friend and you don’t want to lose your best friend but you really want to be together with him.

Between the lines, I can sense that you are completely confused and frustrated. However, you shouldn’t be upset! I am quite sure that I can offer useful advice, which is surely practical to you! I believe you should really give up the boy. Otherwise, you are doomed to lose your best friend. When you lose a boyfriend, you can easily find another one. But if you lose your best friend, you may not find another one easily! If you start dating with the boy, you will surely ruin the friendship with your best friend.

In that case, it will be totally wrong. Remember, you ought to think of others’ feelings as well as perspective. I know it is easier said than done but don’t be silly. It’s never right for you.

What you are looking for is someone who loves you. You should widen your social circle and try to see if there are other boys who are suitable. I am sure your Mr. Right is there waiting for you.

Best wishes,

Agony Uncle
Dear Needs Excitement,

Thanks for writing this letter to me. I am sorry to hear about your problems. I truly sympathize with you. However, don’t worry, as I will help you get through this terrible situation.

Well then, let’s go straight to the heart of the matter. First of all, you should of course try to improve the relationship between you and your boyfriend. Second, you shouldn’t think of going out with a guy that you don’t really know too well. Maybe he has been doing bad things like breaking the law or at the very least spending time with people with criminal tendencies. You simply don’t know what he has been doing over the past few years, right? Therefore, it may be really dangerous because you’re in the light while he may be in the dark.

As you said, your boyfriend never makes you sad so you shouldn’t hurt him. He simply doesn’t deserve that. I bet it will hurt him a lot if you tell him that you’re going to break up with him and start going out with a guy that you’re not completely familiar with. Your present boyfriend is more reliable. You and your boyfriend have experienced many wonderful things during the last two years. I guarantee that he still loves you. He just doesn’t know how to express his feelings. You can try to break the ice and communicate with him more to find out what has happened between you and him. I am sure you will find ways to break the ice and start resolving this problem.

Well, this is my advice. I hope you can really break the ice and put these problems to rest. Just always remember one thing — never cheat on your boyfriend. Go for it! Start communicating and start resolving!

Best wishes,
Agony Aunt
The Rooftop Garden in My Campus

2B Keith Tsang

Pui Ching is a big school and there are many unique corners in the campus, so what is your favourite corner of Pui Ching Middle School? Is it the canteen or the playground? As for me, the place I like most at school is the garden.

My favourite corner is located on the rooftop of Block J. It is a place for us to plant different vegetation. It is small but comfortable. There are some plants around the garden.

I like this garden most because it is a wonderful place for me to enjoy my school life and play with my friends. The garden is small so almost everyone hates to stay there but it is special to me because it means that my friends and I are free to do anything we like. My friends and I plant vegetables there because we all like eating vegetables. We go there every Friday after school because we do not need to go to school the next day. We will water our plants and take care of them. When they grow up, we will cut them out and share them with our family. Besides planting, I will also share my feelings with my friends there. Sometimes we will talk about what happened that day. We also like to buy ice-cream and enjoy it in the garden during summer.

We have a lot of great memories in the garden. I hope you will like this special place, too.
My Favourite Invention

2C Aaron Chan

Without this invention, people will not know any happenings around the world, or its history. To put it in simple words, there will be no books.

What are books made of? It is an easy question, isn’t it? Yes, it is paper, which is my favorite invention. Paper is no doubt a necessary item in our daily lives.

Paper is a versatile material with many uses. The most common use is for writing and printing. It is also widely used as a packaging material as well as in the cleaning, industrial and construction process, and even for medical purposes since its natural properties make it ideal to be used as bandages, be it swabs or surgical tapes, which can facilitate the healing of the wound. Also, in business, paper is indispensable in a busy office environment – without letters, labels or post-its, businesses would soon grind to a halt.

Paper is in fact a thin material produced by pressing together moist fibres typically cellulose pulp derived from wood, rags or grass and drying them into flexible sheets. Paper and the pulp paper-making process was said to have been developed in China during the early 2nd century A.D. by Cai Lun, a eunuch serving the emperor during the Han Dynasty.

With paper being an effective substitute for silk in many occasions, China could therefore export silk in greater quantities to other countries contributing to a flourishing, prosperous and strong Han Dynasty.

From the past till now, paper has been such a natural part of our daily lives that we may sometimes forget how much we rely upon this essential, renewable and evolving resource. Thanks to the invention of paper, the wisdom and civilization of mankind can be recorded and inherited.
I Wanna Be Yours
2C Aaron Chan

Let me be your camera
Taking photos of your vivacious smiley face
Let me be your recorder
Playing the sweet melodies you embrace
Let me be your diary
Depicting our romantic love story
You are my only dearest fairy
I wanna be yours

Let me be your pillow
Kissing you softly every night
Let me be your window
Inviting sunshine to make you cheerful and bright
Let me be your guardian angel
Bringing you happiness no one can ever offer
You are in my eyes a miracle
I don’t wanna be hers
I wanna be yours.
Without this invention, people will be bored. Nowadays, this invention is a necessity for businessmen, students, kids, and even the elderly.

Do you know what it is? I am sure you can get it! It is the iPhone! Most people are addicted to using the iPhone. It has become a trend in many countries. Walking on any street in Hong Kong, at least six or seven people out of ten are using the iPhone. Let me introduce this invention to you, which I like most.

The iPhone was invented by Steve Jobs, who is the most brilliant inventor I have ever known, and it was invented on 29 June 2007. The iPhone is an excellent gadget because students can study using this device. Students can use an iPhone to search for information for their homework, hand in their homework via the Internet, complete exercises in e-assessment and so on. The iPhone also allows us to download many different kinds of Apps for entertainment, books, health, education and travel. Whenever iPhone users have free time, they will take out their iPhones and play with them. If their iPhones were to disappear, they would definitely feel uneasy and bored.

If you tell me “I don’t know how to use this gadget”, I can assure you, even if I give an iPhone to the elderly, they can handle it easily because the iPhone is so user-friendly and you will use it with ease. Even when you do not know how to do something on it, you can go to the ‘Settings’ and look at the user’s guide.

After knowing more about the iPhone, do you think it is an amazing gadget? Do you agree it is a necessity for you? Come On! It is very useful and convenient!
A Mysterious Incident that Drove a Policeman Insane

2C Sam Ng

On a dark spooky night, a young man was walking his shaggy dog. When they were crossing a road, an enormous garbage truck crashed into them accidentally. The young man was seriously injured with a deep wound on his forehead and the dog suffered excessive bleeding.

After a week, a chubby driver drove on the same road. He was stopped by a suspicious-looking man. When his car had come to a halt, he saw a pale man and a semi-transparent dog standing by the road. The man asked the driver if he could have a lift and the driver replied he could.

When they got into the car, the pale man whispered to the chubby driver and asked if he could take him to Fanling. The driver answered that there was no problem.

When the car reached Fanling, the driver turned around. To his fright, the young man and his dog had disappeared. The driver called out for the young man but there was no response.

The driver therefore drove his car to the police station. He reported the case to the policeman in shock. The policeman asked to examine his car and the driver agreed. Together they went to the car park where they found the dog inside the car. The driver was so astonished that he opened the door to take a closer look. At that moment, the dog barked at him non-stop. The driver pulled it out and the dog bit him fiercely. The man bled badly on his thigh but the dog would not let him go. The policeman also tried to pull the dog away but he was unsuccessful. The man bled more and more and was close to death so the policeman had no other alternative but to shoot the dog with his gun. The dog finally died and lay on the ground. The policeman came near for observation, yet he could not see the dog, but he saw a man instead. The policeman was very frightened so he ran back to the police station. When he was inside, he saw the dog sitting on his chair. The policeman could not utter a word thus he took his gun to shoot the dog the second time. The dog died on the spot again. When the policeman approached it, he mysteriously found the dog missing again. The policeman shouted loudly and went insane.
Dear Needs Excitement,

Thank you for your trust and belief in me, Needs Excitement. In your letter, you mentioned that you had been with your boyfriend for two years and you loved him very much. You admitted that you were starting to get a bit bored. In addition, you had met your old friend and you started missing him.

From what you wrote, I can truly feel that you are definitely annoyed and frustrated. However, don’t be upset too early. I am certain that I can offer wonderful and practical advice, which can be of great use to you! I believe that you should keep dating your boyfriend. Otherwise, you may regret it if you break up with him just because you start missing your old friend. If you keep dating your boyfriend, then you may know more about him and love him more. If you still don’t like your current boyfriend, you should find another one. Your old friend may really be your Mr. Right. You must tell him what he has done before you break up with him. It’ll be difficult for you to end a relationship, which has already lasted for two years. Remember, you ought to think of another person’s feelings and put yourself into someone else’s shoes. A LOVE TRIANGLE is never good for anyone.

What you are looking for is actually romance. You can try planning a romantic date, so you and your dearest can enjoy the date and perhaps your love will grow. The perfect boy must be there for you, I promise!

Best Wishes,
Agony Aunt
Nothing Is Better Than My School Library!

2D Terrence Au

My Favorite corner of Pui Ching Middle School is the school library. It is located in Block G. It is very old since it was built many years ago. However, it is of great historic interest. It closes at half past five every day.

Many students like to go to the library during lunch hour or before examinations. You don’t need to climb any stairs to get there so it is very convenient to reach the school library. The library is about the size of three classrooms. It is quite big and spacious.

The reason why it is my favorite corner is that it has a comfortable setting. I can have lots of fun reading with my classmates in the library. Another reason why I love this place is that I can borrow many books there. Some books are really interesting. I enjoy reading them very much. Before examinations, I often go to the library to study. It is the best place for revision. When I am tired, I often go to the library to take a short rest. It is peaceful and quiet, so you can take a good rest.

Readers, are you interested to come and visit my favorite corner at school? I am certain you will love it as much as me! Once you step into the library, you will for sure appreciate the beauty of it.
A Painful But Memorable Experience

2E Joey Kung

Last month, I was playing basketball one day after school. Playing hard and being unaware of my surroundings, I fell down in an awkward position and injured my leg. I was immediately sent to hospital by an ambulance and received treatment in the Emergency Room.

An hour later, I could leave the Emergency Room but I was in a wheelchair as my leg injury was so serious that the doctor told me I had to stay in a wheelchair for the following three months. When I learned about this news, I at once screamed, "No way! This can't be real!" My heart broke because being in a wheelchair meant that I would not be able to walk and move freely. Being an active and sporty person, I felt this was like having a nightmare.

The next day, I returned to school and I felt embarrassed for looking abnormal. Many of my schoolmates were looking at me in an unusual way and most of them were not even aware of the extra effort I had to make in order to go to the classroom. When I finally arrived at the classroom with the help of my mother, I heard a few classmates giggling. Tears started dropping from my eyes immediately as I felt disrespected and humiliated. What was worse was that I could not participate in the PE lessons and I was left alone in the classroom to do revision.

I had my school life for three months with similar encounters every day. I felt very lonely but at the same time, I have learned from this painful experience. I have come to realize that being a disabled person requires tremendous courage and energy. Disabled people should be respected and treated equally, just like anyone else in the world. To share this memorable experience, I have decided to take part in more voluntary work so that I can work with disabled people to show my love to them.
Introduction
Over the last two weeks my group mates and I have investigated one of the many festivals from around the world. Here in this article, we will present our investigation’s findings. This article will introduce the background, location, time and rituals surrounding the Spanish festival of La Tomatina.

Background
La Tomatina started in 1944 in a town in the Spanish province of Valencia. It is a festival in which people throw tomatoes throughout the streets of the town. Despite having a humble beginning, the event has evolved into a grand festival in recent years.

Location
La Tomatina is held in the Valencian town of Buñol. The town of Buñol is located thirty kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea and is in the eastern part of Spain.

Time
La Tomatina usually occurs on the last Wednesday of every August. It usually begins at 10 in the morning. It begins with participants trying to get a ham that has been placed at the top of a greased pole. Once someone manages to claim the ham, people begin to throw tomatoes at each other. This usually begins at 11 am and will stop two hours later.

Rituals
La Tomatina includes a cooking contest, which is held on the day prior to day of world’s biggest food-fight. On the day of the tomato throwing, shopkeepers will board up their stores to prevent them from being dirtied or damaged during the tomato fight. As mentioned before, a ham must be collected from a greased pole before the event starts. However, the event only begins when a rocket is fired to signal the food fight can begin. During the fight, people are strongly encouraged to wear safety goggles and gloves to help avoid injury. Furthermore, there is a rule surrounding the condition of the tomato before it can be thrown – it must be
squashed up before it can be thrown. After two hours, a second rocket is fired and this signals the end of the tomato throwing. If participants continue to throw tomatoes after the rocket, then they are required to pay a fine to the town. Everyone then helps clean up the mess. It is truly one of the world’s most unusual festivals.
Today I am finally a normal person again. I can walk, I don't have to stay in a wheelchair anymore and I have my freedom of moving around on my own back. I hope I can enjoy my school life again without being isolated by my schoolmates anymore. I am really looking forward to starting my brand new life. However, the torturing experience I suffered in recent months will never be forgotten.

Three months ago, I played basketball with my buddies one day after school at the school basketball court. Since there were six of us including me, we decided to form two teams and play a three on three half-court game. After playing the game for a while, the game was still undecided as our scores were very tight. After taking a short break, we decided to take the game to overtime and agreed that whichever team could make one last basket would be the winning team. In one play, I made a quick move to try to grab the ball and jumped up to shoot the ball, thinking that I would succeed in making the final shot. While I was up in the air, what nobody expected happened - the defender in front of me lost her balance and bumped into me. I fell immediately and landed on the ground with my left leg in a very awkward position. I could not help but break out crying at that moment as the immense pain from the injury was something I had never experienced in my life.

Although everyone was shocked and speechless when they saw my injury, my teammates remained calm and immediately asked a teacher to call the ambulance. I was sent to the emergency room at a nearby hospital and the doctor-in-charge told me that my ankle was severely broken and I would have to stay in a wheelchair for the next three months with a plastered leg and foot. I was heartbroken despite the fact that my parents and friends were all being supportive. I just could not imagine how life would be without the ability to play sports, run freely, or even just walk around freely.

When I returned to school after a week of rest, the official nightmare began. Everyone was looking at me strangely because I was in a wheelchair and I was greeted by schoolmates who called me the "handicapped girl". I was alienated by my classmates and felt so embarrassed that I did not want to leave the classroom at all. During PE lessons, I could only remain in my wheelchair and watch my classmates enjoy their good time. I was so emotional and depressed because of the way I was treated.

Now that three months has passed, I can finally get back on my own two feet and return to the healthy and sporty person that I used to be. Although it was a
torturing and extremely undesirable experience, to me it was actually a blessing in disguise because now I understand the importance of treating people equally with respect and care. Differences exist among people and we should always be respectful when we encounter people who are different from us. The injury was temporary, but the lesson I have learned from it will be remembered forever.
The Day When I Turned Into a Prisoner

2F Ellen Chan

“I wish I had given the banknotes to the police. If I had done it, I wouldn’t have been caught...’ ‘I wish the clock could be turned back to yesterday.’ John was thinking in jail.

Do you know why John was in jail? Yesterday, when John was walking along the street, he found that he didn’t have enough banknotes in his wallet. So he went to the automatic teller machine around the corner to withdraw some cash.

When John wanted to use the ATM, the machine was suddenly began to malfunction and started to eject banknotes from the ATM automatically. Then John was shocked and said, ‘Oh my God! What a lucky day for me!’

After a while, a pile of banknotes was near John’s feet. John looked around carefully to check that nobody saw him. Then, John started to pick up the banknotes quickly and put them in his bag. After that, he said, ‘So lucky that no one saw me!’ Shortly afterwards, he left the ATM.

That night, a police officer knocked on the door of John’s house. John opened the door and he felt a little scared. Then John asked, ‘What’s the matter?’ ‘A staff member of Golden Bank recognized you from the CCTV footage of the ATM that malfunctioned this morning.’ John couldn’t say anything at that moment. He didn’t want to be caught. So he shouted ‘No!’ to the police officer, but the police officer played the CCTV video to John and said ‘You do not have any excuses! This is the evidence. I need to bring you back to the police station!’ Then John followed the police.

‘I wish I had given the banknotes to the police. If I had done it, I wouldn’t have been caught ...’ ‘I wish the clock could be turned back to yesterday.’ John thought in jail, but it was too late to change.
The Day When I Turned Into a Millionaire

2F June Lai

John was a poor young man and he was so unlucky. He lost his job for the twentieth time last week. He was now walking through the streets in search of a new job. The street was sizzling and noisy, a peculiar encounter happened!

An ATM machine was ejecting banknotes and they landed on the ground and piled up like a hill. John was dumbfounded. He stared at the money and kept on rubbing his eyes. ‘Oh my goodness! What’s going on? The banknotes are... are...’ He looked around to see if any policeman was patrolling. It was a big temptation for John. He had never seen so much money before. ‘Should I get the money? If I get the money, my life will change completely! I will never need to work again. But I must be a law-abiding man. I should not take the money, should I?’

A vicious voice from his heart kept on asking him to take all the money and leave. His head was aching and he squatted on the ground and shivered. He couldn’t control his greed.

After a while, a man tapped him on his shoulder. ‘Hey man! What are you doing here?’ All the money has been snapped up by the passers-by. You are a generous rich man. Thank you for letting us keep the money. Thank you.’
1st November, 2013

Dear Needs Excitement,

Thanks for writing to me. I feel sorry about your problems. However, you don’t need to worry. I am certain that my advice will help you.

In your letter, you said that you were starting to get a bit bored with your boyfriend and had started to miss your old friend. Why don’t you start doing something exciting or enjoyable with your boyfriend? For example, you could participate in some extreme sports together like skydiving or demolition derby. Alternatively, you could join a marathon and race together side by side. I also suggest starting a hobby to get rid of boring situations. You can also start playing video games or board games or less extreme sports like tennis, golf or cycling. Another thing you could do together is to join a club e.g. a chess club, a bakery club or even a yoga club.

If I were you, I would talk to your boyfriend. You could tell him about your problems, so that you can both improve in different ways. Or you can discuss with your boyfriend how he could change. I would advise you to say the truth to your boyfriend and find a solution.

I don’t think you should start a relationship with the new boy (your old friend) because you don’t know much about your old friend. He might be a drug addict or alcoholic or he might have even been a criminal before!

I hope my advice will help you. I am sure things will get better soon. Let me know how things turn out.

Best wishes,
Agony Aunt
Dear Confused,

I’m sorry to hear your sorrow. I understand that it is hard to choose between friendship and romantic relationship. You mentioned that your best friend’s boyfriend was in love with you, but you didn’t want to upset your best friend. It was such an embarrassing situation! However, if you want to be together with your best friend’s boyfriend, you may ruin the friendship with your best friend.

I think you should know that friendship and a new boyfriend couldn’t co-exist in your case. I know that it is a dilemma so I’ll give you some advice to solve the problem. You know what? Honesty is the best policy. You can tell your best friend the truth. If it works, you can be together with him and not have to love him secretly. But you need to be brave enough to tell the truth and your best friend may not talk to you anymore. You should sit down with your friend and tell her the truth. If she seems angry when listening to you, calm her down. If you make your confession in this way, you may succeed and have a chance to reconcile with both your best friend and her boyfriend.

You should think twice before you really take action. You must determine which is more important- the love between you and your best friend’s boyfriend or your friendship with your best friend. If you have a crush on that boy, you should think about why you love him in the first place and seize the chance. I bet you will make a clever decision, right?

I hope my advice will help you with the problem. Tell me your good news later.

Best wishes,

Agony Aunt
Henry Adams once said, ‘A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.’ Teachers have immense effects on their students. What makes a ‘good’ teacher? What are the essential qualities of an educator? To me, patience, amiable personality and communication are the essential qualities of an outstanding teacher.

A good teacher should be patient. Students nowadays are known to be active if not hyperactive. Chitchatting is often seen during lessons. To grab the attention of students, some teachers shout at them. But we know that yelling and shouting obviously does not help to calm the uproarious students down. Teachers should be patient and kind so that they can educate and appreciate students’ individual and unique strengths and weaknesses.

Besides being patient, an amiable personality is of equal importance. On top of passing on knowledge, a good teacher should be able to inculcate positive life attitude and values to students. Regarding “Ms. Lam Wai-sze incident”, it is not acceptable for a teacher to swear in public. After all, teachers are the role models of students; students follow and imitate whatever they do. Teachers should uphold strict moral codes and ethics.

Communication is the key to effective teaching. Every child is unique, knowing and understanding every individual is vital for teachers so that they can teach according to individual differences. Without taking learners’ differences into consideration, students can never learn effectively. Teachers can employ apps or websites like Instagram and Facebook to keep in touch with their students. These things can surely help them understand what their students are up to.

All in all, teenagers are the pillars of our society; education is crucial in shaping them into an upright and responsible citizen. To be a good educator, one should be patient with teenagers, having an amiable personality and good at communicating with students.
It was tedious to have a long summer holiday. As usual, I woke up late at 2p.m. After lunch, as I was surfing the Internet aimlessly, my mobile phone rang. It was Abbie, the funniest and strongest girl I had ever met. She asked me if I could go out with her as she had been ‘trapped’ at home for one week after having broken her leg in a wild camp. Abbie asked me to meet her at the Queen’s Department Store. I was surprised because she did not enjoy shopping.

When I arrived at the store, I found that Mandy and Jane were there, too. “Hey, how are you? Have you been bored throughout this long hot holiday? Let’s do something thrilling!” exclaimed Abbie as soon as she arrived. While we were wondering what was in her brain, she whispered, “Let’s play hide and seek inside this department store after it’s closed this evening! There’s a rumour that weird things happen here at midnight.” I never believe in ghost but I also find this idea interesting.

We hid at the corner of a storeroom and luckily no one discovered us. When the department store was closed, we tiptoed out the room. It was really fascinating. The store looked much bigger than normal, as we were the only visitors in it. However, as Abbie turned on her torch, we were dumbfounded! Guess what we saw? The dummies were moving! They were jumping towards us. We were so frightened that we dashed to the other corner of the store. There, the toy planes were flying while the toy tanks were firing at us! We rushed to the ground floor where we saw figures in the posters staring at us! “Help! Help!” Mandy screamed and Jane was crying. Our tough girl, Abbie was sitting on the floor. “Oh! I can’t move! My legs are trembling!” she yelled. I carried her to the emergency exit and then we fled.

We dared not tell our parents or any friends this terrible experience until I read a piece of news a week later. “Peter Wong, the ex-manager of the Queen’s Department Store was arrested for creeping into the store and tricking the guards last night. Fired by the boss, Peter Wong took revenge by moving the dummies, starting the electronic appliances and making noises at the department store at midnight. He wished that the scared guards would spread the rumour that there was a ghost in the store so no one would visit it.” Even though we finally found out the truth, we, especially Abbie, swore that we would never go to a department store at midnight again.
Dear Peter,

Thanks for your letter. I feel really sorry for you! After reading it, some ideas jumped into my mind, which may help you avoid having such a BAD day again.

First of all, you said you had such misfortune because of ‘Black Friday’ but I can’t agree with you. If your hypothesis is correct, ‘Black Friday’ will bring everyone on this Earth bad luck. Numerous accidents and misfortune should have happened on this day. However, the greatest disaster in human history --- the First World War broke out on 14th July (I learnt it today in my History lesson.). It was not a ‘Black Friday’! Therefore, it’s superstitious to believe that your misfortune was the result of it.

Then, why have you suffered a lot? Let’s start with your ‘antique alarm clock’. You were late because it didn’t work that morning. It is ten years older than you!!! If I were you, I would buy a new one. Moreover, I would not stay up until mid-night. According to some science research, our livers, one of the most important human organs rest when we sleep. It’s extremely unhealthy to stay awake until dawn.

If you can change your daily routine, the other problems can be solved easily. You will be able to go to the bus stop before the peak hour and you can catch the bus. Moreover, you will have time to check your schoolbag and put your homework inside. You will even have extra time to finish your breakfast. Having a healthy and regular routine is important. Therefore, from now on, don’t do your homework the night before the deadline. If you had handed in your homework on time, you would not have been put in detention and had a stomachache.

If you believe in me, you can see that your ‘Black Friday’ was the result of your poor daily routine. Forget about the ridiculous myth and change your habit immediately. I hope my advice may help you. Go to sleep early and have a sweet dream!

Love,

Chris
How I Stopped Wars With My Supernatural Powers
3B David Man

One day, I argued with my classmate. In the argument he shouted at me, “Are you sick? If you are, you should go to hospital!” I was really angry and wanted to prove him wrong. “Let’s go to hospital together to see who is really sick!” I replied. Strangely, he promised to go to hospital with me at once.

I was really shocked when I received the medical report. The doctor said, “Sir, I regret to tell you that you have a very rare illness. You only have one year left to live. However, the good news is that you have a supernatural power now because of that illness. If you use it incorrectly, it can be extremely dangerous.” I kept on asking what that supernatural power was. But the doctor kept on saying, “It’s too dangerous to tell you.”

I still went to school the next day. I was so depressed that I could not pay attention in class. During the group discussion time, the whole class became very noisy. I was annoyed and I could not help shouting, “Shut up!” After that, the whole class and even the teacher were completely silent. I was shocked!

“Stand up!” I shouted and everyone in the class stood straight up. I was surprised again. Then, I realized what my supernatural power was – my wishes can come true! I was thrilled.

Should I change the world with my power? Or should I treat my disease and return to the normal life? This is a dilemma I have never faced. It was a difficult option. Perhaps I should be an ordinary student...

No! The world is full of hatred, revenge and wars. I must stop them. So, I went to see the President of the United States of America.

Everyone wanted to block my way. But when I gave the order “Protect me until I see the President”, everyone provided his or her help. Finally, I opened the door to the President’s office.
“Sit down, Mr. President!” He followed suit. I continued, “Honestly, would you mind stopping all the wars in the world?” He replied, “I’m afraid that our enterprises can earn a great deal of money in the wars, so wars are necessary ...”

“You don’t understand,” I interrupted, “Stop the wars. Let wars become history. Bring peace and love to people and tell your successors to do so too.”

There was a moment of silence until the President reluctantly said, “Yes, sir.” He called his generals and troops were withdrawn from all over the world.

From that day on, the world is full of joy. However, I can only enjoy a year of peace ...
A long time ago, there were two brave hunters hunting in a dark and horrible forest. Suddenly, they were caught by some muscular robbers who had guns and knives in their hands. All their belongings were robbed by them as well. Moreover, one of the hunters was badly hurt.

They tried to find some food to eat but they couldn’t. They didn’t eat anything for 3 days. They were starving and felt miserable and hopeless. They walked like vampires finding food to eat. Fortunately, they saw a man carrying a big bucket near the river. Feeling hopeful, they ran as quickly as possible.

They grovelled for his assistance, and the man brought them to the village and asked for the villagers’ opinion. They came to a secret village. The villagers, who were so weak and skinny, surrounded them. They grovelled for some food and a place to rest. However, the village hadn’t had enough food to eat as it had been raining heavily in these few months and they couldn’t farm. The villagers discussed the situation for a while. The head of the village suddenly said, “If we don’t give the hunters food, they will suffer endlessly. We should have mercy on people in need of their help. Therefore, we shouldn’t be apathetic towards the hunters.” They villagers thought for a minute and nodded.

The benevolent villagers shared their limited food with them and took care of them. They always shared jokes among themselves and they lived with the villagers peacefully and joyfully.

A few months later, one of the hunters totally recovered. They wept and appreciated all the villagers who took care of them. They started hunting after that and shared all the animals with the villagers to repay their kindness. They enjoyed the sharing very much. They believed that as long as they could share kindness, there would never be hunger again.
Dear Stephanie,

How have you been lately? I’m glad to receive your letter. You have mentioned that you and your family have entered the “Save Water, Save Life” contest. As an environmentalist, I am writing to give you some tips in order to help you win the contest!

Using a dishwasher and a washing machine is convenient and saves a lot of time. However, your mum uses it when there are only a few plates or when the machine is only half-loaded. It is certainly a waste of water. It will be helpful if she only uses them when they are fully loaded. By installing an energy saving washing machine and a water-conserving dishwasher, you will certainly see your water bill drop!

Secondly, your sister loves to brush her teeth and lather her hair with running water. Your brother takes a bath in bathtub twice a day. These are all bad habits and they should stop doing them right away. Turn off the taps when you are not using them and replace old faucets with efficient low-flow models to conserve more water.

Water leakage from taps in the kitchen, toilet and garden is serious! According to research, leaks make up 13.7% of indoor household water use which means that you are paying for the water without using it! You had better fix the taps as soon as possible and cut the loss!

In the time, when the globe is experiencing unprecedented levels of a rise in the standard of living and our lives are seemingly perfect, it is lamentable that we have lost sight of the underprivileged who are plagued by a shortage of water. Water comes out of taps is the norm in our life but water is as precious as gold in their lives. Please do not only conserve water for the contest but also do it for lives!

Anyway, I hope my advice helps. Good luck to you and your family. Please keep me in touch on how your work goes. Write soon!

Best wishes,

Alice
It was a dark night; the rain being carried by the wind. Alex, a taxi driver, was driving his taxi, singing a song when he saw a man and a dog standing on the road waiting for a taxi. So, he drove his taxi near them and gave them a lift.

“Where do you want to go?” Alex asked. “Fanling please,” his passenger said. “Okay, no problem,” Alex answered. While Alex was driving, the passenger introduced himself. He said, “My name is Peter, this is my dog, Funny. It is very cute, so I like him very much.” Alex didn’t care about what he said. Suddenly, the air-conditioner stopped working. Alex thought that it was only a mechanical problem so he opened the windows and let the wind blow into the car. The darkness and the wind made him feel frightened. Peter continued, “Don’t be sad about the death of your girlfriend, Alex.”

The taxi arrived at Fanling just after Peter said his word. Alex said, “This is Fanling. The fare is one-hundred … wait … how do you know my girlfriend?” When Alex turned around to ask Peter, Peter had disappeared. Alex was very frightened since he had just heard his voice.

As he didn’t know what to do, he went to the nearest police station and asked for help. While Alex was telling the police what had happened, a newspaper suddenly fell out from the shelves. The headline was the news about a man and a dog killed in a car accident. When Alex looked at the picture of the newspaper closely, he screamed. The passenger he just drove had died a week ago!

At the moment, all lights in the police station went out at the same time. The door opened and a man with a dog materialized ….
Dear Edith,

How are you? You mentioned in the letter that you recently suffered from insomnia. I feel very sorry and sympathize with you. Insomnia is a common problem; I also had the same problem before so I will share with you my own experience and give you some advice. Hope you will feel better.

Before taking my advice below, I won’t encourage you to take sleeping pills or pain relievers like most people do. This is harmful as these kinds of medications contain caffeine and other stimulants. They make you groggy in the beginning and they may cause urinary problem later on.

In order to deal with this problem, you have to know the reasons why you got such a problem. I think you have too much stress from your studies as you are a perfectionist, and your parents also have high expectations for you. These reasons keep your mind active at night and make it difficult to sleep. Another reason I noticed is that you drink too much coffee and Coca-Cola. These drinks contain caffeine, which is a well-known stimulant that you should avoid.

To solve this problem, I recommend you listen to soft soothing music and it will help you to sleep. There are many CDs designed for this purpose. I enclosed one CD for you. A glass of warm milk 15 minutes before going to bed will soothe your nervous system. But if you can’t or don’t like to drink milk, you can try a cup of hot chamomile, catnip or fennel tea. All these contain natural ingredients, which will help you to sleep.

Exercise regularly can help to relieve some of the tension built up over the day. But remember not to do vigorous exercise too close to bedtime.

Last but not least is thinking positively. You can’t be the best of the best always. Take it easy and relax always. If you have a good mind then you will have good health. A joyful heart is good medicine. On the contrary, a broken spirit dries up the bones. I hope my advice will help you deal with the tension and stress that leads to insomnia so that you can enjoy a good night’s sleep.
If you want to know more about insomnia, you may go to:
http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/articles/110.html
http://www.medici
nenet.com/insomnia/article.htm
http://www.hkmenshealth.com/ena/mind/insomnia .aspx

Hope you get well soon and please write to me in a week or two to tell me of your progress. Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Love,
Timothy
The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw, “An unbelievable, huge mess!” yelled Sammy.

Before Sammy opened his bedroom door, a sonorous “Crack!” was made. He hurried into his room instantly. He was frozen at the sight of the mess in his room. As he scanned around the violent scene, he had a swift peek of Val, his crocodile, whose tail was first dangling on the windowsill and was gone in a blink of the eye. He hastily dashed to his window, which was half-opened. Although he looked out of the window searchingly, there was no sign of Val.

Sammy had no idea what to do, but stared at the destruction inside the room. His room looked bizarrely like a disaster zone, there were hundreds of puddles of muddy water and pieces of cracked lamp all over the floor, the bathtub was a nice swamp if you were an animal, his drawers were partially opened, and there were clothes and shoes lying helplessly on the humid floor. His mattress and his bed sheets were as creased and crumbled as apple crumbles, whereas his pillow was a shooting target, and confetti made of feathers were cast everywhere.

Feared that Val might cause further miserable and fatal troubles to others, Sammy called the police promptly and started searching for Val urgently. Just as he left his flat, a spine-chilling feminine scream led him to his neighbor, two floors below. The girl downstairs was shrieking and Sammy sighed. The girl told him that she saw Val scuttle into her living room and then grappled a few of her pricey diamonds out of her glass jar. Sammy thought the girl was intimidated by Val. Leaving the girl alone and wishing that Val was still on that floor, he rocketed through the corridor, but Val was no longer there.

“Bam! Bam!” the tremendous sound of a gun being fired must have thoroughly wakened the entire building. Sammy sprinted down the stairs rapidly to Bob’s place. He’s the only neighbour who owns guns. “Sammy! Val’s out!” Bob yelled frightfully, which was outlandish for a muscular man like himself. He could scarcely speak. He looked seriously pale, “Val...stole...gun...left...” Bob mumbled vaguely. Val stole his guns? Sammy frowned, and wondered if they were utterly insane, or intently serious?

Everything was so horribly unreal and messed up. Sammy started weeping bitterly. Soon, the police approached. Recklessly, ignoring Sammy’s flooded face, they
marched to him blissfully. Why would the police be blissful when a crocodile was sadly missing? Unaccountably, Val turned out to be a famous hero, his name and story had spread across the entire globe, “The Wonder Crocodile” was what they now called him willfully—but why?

This was actually what happened. That day, a burglar sneaked into a flat in Tong Kong Estate, which was the same building where Sammy’s flat was located. Val, somehow wisely sensed that and thus valiantly tried to capture the burglar. Val tried too rigorously to spring out of the bathroom, and accidentally broke the things in Sammy’s bedroom.

Mysteriously, Val thoughtfully knew he needed weapons in order to seize the burglar, so he bolted floor to floor for them. The burglar nervously mentioned that Val knowledgeably attacked him by hurling sharp, pointed diamonds viciously at him, “It felt like stabbing knives into my body!” he grimaced, “Also, he glared at me triumphantly with a gun hanging from his tail!”

Everyone’s jaw dropped after noticing this supernatural story, especially Sammy. As Val was now as popular as super stars, he had an enormous number of fans and visitors every day. His home was now a tourist attraction, and Tong Kong Estate was never the same again.
The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom.

One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw. The bathroom door was opened partially and the floor was utterly wet. His mattress and pillow were torn, making the room full of feathers. Sammy’s face turned pale and his breath quickened. The crocodile was gone! He tiptoed to the opened window and scanned anxiously—the ice that had been in Sammy’s veins seemed to crystallize, freezing him in place—the crocodile was crawling in his neighbor, Annabeth’s garden!

Sammy instantly climbed out of the window and bolted to the other estate recklessly. The crocodile climbed into the house, so did Sammy. Fortunately there was no one outside the house and soon Sammy found the crocodile, which was crawling towards the kitchen. He caught it straightaway. He was ready to leave and then froze.

The door was opening. Sammy could hear the creak of wood, muffled voices and footsteps. Without another thought he propelled the crocodile into the kitchen and he squatted to hide himself.

“Mum! I’m thirsty,” came a voice—horribly familiar—from the living room. “Can you give me some water?”

It’s Annabeth. Sammy’s knees were trembling and his heart was hammering. The footsteps of Annabeth’s mother approached punctually and his heart skittered in his chest.

“Mum! I need some help!” Annabeth bawled abruptly. The footsteps disappeared bit by bit. Sammy sighed and glimpsed an opened window. He peeked at the living room to make sure someone was there. Then he gingerly fled from the window with the crocodile and galloped back to his house swiftly.

They arrived at the bedroom and Sammy incidentally saw the unbearably small area being taken up by the little bathtub. He promptly realized that the bathroom
was too small for the crocodile. Guilt went through his veins and blood. He realized
that he had always neglected it. He had never let it go out to explore this big world. It
could only stay in a small tub woefully. It was not where he was meant to be. It
should be living in the marshes. Now he was imprisoning the crocodile, not
protecting it. Sammy tenderly hugged the crocodile and hushed, “I’m sorry. I promise
I will give you a better life.” The crocodile sparkled its eyes. It seemed to understand
what he said.

The next day was a sunny day. Sammy valiantly decided to set it free. He gave
the crocodile to the World Society for the Protection of Animals. He didn’t feel
gloomy, oppositely, his lips curved up at the corners, blissfully. It was the last time he
gazed at it, as the crocodile anxiously rested. He could feel it. He murmured, “You’re
going back to your real home. Don’t forget me. Don’t’ forget the bath tub.” A note of
yearning crept into his voice.

The sunshine practically blinded him when he came out from the WSPA building.
When he arrived at his estate, he stared at it contentedly — the last time he thought
it was plain and normal, but this time it was different, it’s beautiful, attractive and
memorable.

Tong Kong Estate was never the same again.
The “Lam Wai-sze incident” has stirred up much controversy these days. Some support Ms. Lam for her outspoken character while others question how a teacher, being a role model of our next generation, should behave in public. To me, discipline, communication and comprehensive knowledge are the three essential qualities of a good teacher.

A good teacher should teach by example, therefore ‘discipline’ is of utmost importance. Take Ms. Lam Wai Sze incident as an example, how could Ms. Lam discipline her students when she herself swears in the public arena? Before judging and disciplining students, teachers should behave themselves and set a good example for them to follow. Disciplining students is equally important, without proper class management skills, lessons cannot be carried out smoothly.

Other than discipline, ‘communication’ is vital too. Constant communication between teachers and students can definitely enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Rapport is built when students feel comfortable talking with their teachers. Students are more willing to ask questions when they feel secure and loved. By asking questions, students’ critical thinking skill is enhanced.

Last but not least, an inspiring teacher should demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the subject he is teaching. A good teacher must be equipped with comprehensive academic knowledge. A proficient teacher can be able to help students understand difficult and complicated concepts via daily life examples. Students will not only learn the subject knowledge but will also be able to appreciate the subject.

To nurture teenagers, a good teacher is essential. Effective discipline and communication skills enable teachers to carry out lessons smoothly. Having vast knowledge of key learning areas helps teachers not only teach the knowledge but also inspire teenagers to think and reflect. The above-mentioned qualities are essential qualities that a good teacher should have.
Dear Stephanie,

Glad to receive your letter. How are you doing? I know you and your family have entered the ‘Save Water, Save Lives!’ contest. As an officer of water conservation group, I am writing to offer you some advice to win the contest.

While taking a hot bath at bathtub is relaxing after a tiring day, it will consume up to 50 gallons of water every time. Compare that to taking a shower, only 10 gallons of water is needed. So here is an advice for your brother. If I were he, I would take a shower instead of a hot bath. If you would like to further reduce your water usage, installing a low flow showerhead would be useful too!

The next problem is your dad using clean and fresh water to water the garden every day. You asked me what could be done to rectify the situation. Well, my advice would be to use recycled or used water for cultivation instead. Other than using used water, watering gardens at the right time is vital too. If I were you, I would water the garden early or late in the day to reduce evaporation.

The last problem is the leaking taps in your kitchen, toilet and garden. The leakage makes up a large percentage of indoor household water use. You can consider installing faucet aerators on sink faucets. It will also be ideal if you can fix the leaking taps. It can definitely save a significant amount of water.

I hope the advice helps and wish you all the best in winning the contest. Please let me know how things turn out. Saving water does not only save money, it also benefits future generations. Conserve water and save the earth!

Best wishes,
Rachael
My favorite place is Crete, which is the biggest island in the Aegean Sea in Greece. I have never been there before, but I dream that I can go there when I have grown up. I have fallen in love with this gorgeous place since I watched a travelogue.

I love the sea. Whenever I look at the sea, I feel so relieved. Because of the extensiveness of the sea, it feels as if it can keep any of my secrets without overflowing. I usually express my feelings in my mind towards the sea and the waves always seem like responding to me, which encourages me a lot. This is also the place where my imagination grows. I love to imagine what people are doing and what is happening on the opposite side of the sea.

It explains why I love Crete so much. As you know, Crete is world famous because of the pale blue sea and sky. When I first saw the sea surrounding Crete though the travelogue, it was breathtaking. I was filled with amazement and it was so shocking that I felt like my heart had stopped. The sea was so clear and still as if I could see a granule of sand under the water. It felt so unreal that I could hardly believe that it really exists on earth. When the sun shines on the sea, the whole sea surface shimmers, just like someone has just hurled thousands of tons of diamonds into the sea. What picturesque scenery!

Everywhere in Crete was white and blue; the colors of the clouds and the sea. There wasn’t any dirt. The people in Crete re-paint their dwellings’ external walls in white in order to make sure it was clean and fine. In this unspoiled and sacred place, you will feel so shameful if you flick a tiny spot of dirt on the wall carelessly.

The lifestyle of the people in Crete is very relaxing and comfortable, which I appreciate so much. In Hong Kong, we are always in a hurry. There are too many targets to achieve, too many plans to do, too many competitions to compete in. We seldom rest because there are so many people chasing after us, trying to overtake us. We never have enough time; there are too many things on our to-do list. It is so hard to walk slowly in Mong Kok because the people behind you will push you to walk faster. But in Crete, everything is slow. There is no urgent business; nobody is in a hurry and there isn’t any to-do list and competitions too. This is a place we crave for. I am not asking you to give up on anything, I am just asking you to relax yourself,
having a holiday in such a tranquil wonderful place and let your heart feel peace and calm, then go back and fight again, for yourself, for your family and for the things and people you treasure.

This is the Paradise for me and I treasure it a lot. I believe that we don’t want the day to happen when we can only show the pictures to our kids, telling them our sea was once so beautiful and untarnished. Crete is my favorite place not only because of the stunning scenery and pureness but also because of the people’s attitude and the heart to protect their homeland.
A Frightening Encounter

Emily Chan

It was a cold and misty January night when Mr. Wong had just finished his work and was on the way back to his home in Fanling. He drove as fast as he could since his family was waiting for him at home. Suddenly, he saw a young man and his German shepherd waving at him near a bend. Though it was strange that someone was standing beside a quiet road waving at him at night, he was so courageous that he stopped his car in front of them. Seeing that both the young man and his dog looked friendly, he asked the young man if he could help him.

‘Can I have a lift? I have to go to Fanling,’ the young man asked.

‘Sure! Get in!’ Mr. Wong replied.

The young man and his dog got into the car. On the way to Fanling, the young man was sitting in the back not making a sound. Mr. Wong looked at the reflection in the rearview mirror, but he could see nothing. He felt odd but he did not dare to start a conversation.

Time passed and they finally reached their destination. Mr. Wong was relieved and spoke cheerfully, ‘We’re now in Fan….’ When he turned round, he found that those seats at the back were empty. He was shocked. He did not know what to do. He called his wife immediately. His wife felt scared too and asked him to report this mysterious incident to the police.

When Mr. Wong arrived at the police station, he dashed to the front desk at once and shouted, ‘I don’t know how that happened but they just disappeared!’ Mr. Wong told the police sergeant what had happened to him in a trembling voice. Mr. Wong thought the sergeant would probably laugh at him. He felt embarrassed and regretted losing control. However, the sergeant calmed him down and showed him a news article from a week ago.

‘Are they the man and the German shepherd you’ve met just now?’ the police sergeant asked him in a serious tone.
Mr. Wong took the newspaper and read carefully. It was said that a man and his dog had been killed in a car accident at exactly the same bend in the road where he picked them up. Silence crept into the room.

‘Do you think those who got into my car are ghosts?’ Mr. Wong broke the silence.

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders.

‘Well, even if they are ghosts, I think... I think they are not bad ghosts,’ Mr. Wong tried to comfort himself. He stood up and stepped out of the police station.
Dear Edith,

I am sorry to hear that you are suffering from insomnia. I understand how stressed and frustrated you are since I used to have such problem a few years ago. I have done some research and have some ideas to improve the situation. I would like to solve the problem with you.

Insomnia is a sleep disorder. It means having difficulty in sleeping. People who have insomnia may not be able to fall asleep and may wake up too early in the morning. I think one of the reasons why you have insomnia is that you drink too much coffee in the evening. It is because of lifestyle choices, such as consuming drinks with caffeine or other stimulants just before bedtime that may lead to suffering from insomnia. Another reason is a poor sleeping environment. You have mentioned in your mail, the street near your building is undergoing construction at night and a bright new billboard was put on the wall of the building right opposite your bedroom. Therefore, perhaps you cannot sleep well because of the noise and light.

I used to have the same problem in the past so now I have some suggestions for you. First, you should develop a bedtime routine. You should do the same thing before going to bed. Soon you’ll connect those activities with sleeping and doing them will make you sleepy.

Also, although you love drinking coffee, you shouldn’t drink it in the evening. You may try eating a light snack, like some crackers or enjoying a glass of warm milk. It may help you to relax.

In order to improve the sleeping environment, you should make sure your bedroom is quiet and dark. You may use a fan to mask the noise or you may use earplugs. To make your room darker, you may hang some dark blinds or curtains over the windows or wear an eye mask.

Don’t worry too much about the things around you. Everything will be fine eventually. I hope that my advice will be helpful. I look forward hearing your good news in your next mail.

Take care,
Janice
Even now, I am still astonished by the news from my doctor.

I went to hospital to receive my medical checkup report. “I regret to tell you that, Mr. Yeung, you have a very rare illness which means you only have a year to live. However, there is some good news - you will have a supernatural power. You have gained the ability to teleport yourself. It is not expensive to cure that disease. You may choose to keep this ability or take the cure,” my doctor said.

I really did not know what to do so I asked my doctor to give me some more time to think about my decision.

I tried to use my power at once by teleporting myself home. My parents were petrified. I told them what was happening on me. However, I did not tell them the entire truth. They did not know that I only had one year to live.

“My dear son,” my mother said, “Now you have this supernatural power. You know you can do a lot of things. Make us proud.” I replied, “But you may not see me again. There are so many people for me to help. I may never come home.”

“Think of us and we’ll know,” my father said, “When you help others, you are actually repaying our love. It doesn’t matter even if we don’t meet.”

Okay, I know what I should do now.

“Doctor, you know, I haven’t contributed much to this world. It may be my destiny to have this opportunity to do something meaningful. I am determined to keep the power. Anyway, thank you for treating me for so long!” After thanking the doctor, I disappeared from the hospital.

I kept helping people all over the world. Of course, I went home sometimes to have dinner with my parents. Although nobody else in the world knows who that “hero” is, my parents are still proud of me. I am also proud of my parents.
Cairns is a regional city in the far north of Queensland, Australia. It is a coastal city and nearby the biggest coral reef in the world, Great Barrier Reef. I visited there in my F.1 summer holiday because I had joined a learning tour.

I loved Cairns when the plane had just arrived there. It was evening. The sunset was so beautiful. The warm and orange sunlight glared on the plane like greeting me. I love the people there. They’re all so nice and kind to me. My host family chatted with me a lot and treated me as their daughter. The students were friendly and talked fervently to me.

The scenery in Cairns was spectacular. The sky was so blue, grasses and flowers were lovely and colourful. At night, the sky was clear so I could see the stars above. I had never seen that in Hong Kong before. I looked at the sky in amazement. I felt the world is vast and we are so tiny. Every night when I looked upon the stars in Cairns, I thought about many things in my life such as the relationship between God and me, my family, my friends, my dreams and hope and my future. I became more mature after the trip and I felt relieved.

Also, I visited the Green Island. It looked like a paradise. The sand is white and soft. The water is blue and crystal clear. I took a glass boat to see the coral reef. I couldn’t believe what I saw. The coral swayed elegantly under the sea. It was picturesque. They’re like flowers in the ocean. Somehow I imagined I was a mermaid and I would find a lot of fun swimming and playing vivaciously in the coral reef.

I miss Cairns. It’s my second home. Unfortunately I didn’t take a lot of photos. Now, I can only find the happiness and beautiful moments in my memories.
One of my favorite places is Palm Cove, a beach in Australia. The beach looks endless as it covers a massive part of Cairns’ east coast line.

The thick but not overgrown palm trees alongside the beach are so extensive that they provide a flawless shade for everyone. Even though the trees are so thick, they are lofty and tidy. All the trees are lopsided leaning in the same direction to share sunlight, like eager children wanting to get ice cream. The leaves are all waving lightly to embrace the cool afternoon breeze.

The sand there is soft and extremely fine. It shines a natural golden color when it sparkles in the sun. Shells seem to be hiding in the sand, waiting for someone to discover their beauty.

The sand extends to the sea, whose picturesque green blue color can already take one’s breath. The white spoondrift shimmers in the sun, while the waves crash onto the sand and produce a vivacious harmony with the birds singing nearby.

The sea is so vast it somehow merges with the stunning azure sky above, which was ornamented by white little clouds. The only thing between the sky and sea is the silhouette of an island far away. The island is so stable and fixed that it forms a ravishing contrast with the dancing waves at our feet.

On the beach, people are relaxing and enjoying their time. Some are sunbathing, some are swimming, some are picking up shells, some are taking photos and some are windsurfing. The footprints everyone left behind make the beach even livelier.

Beaches always make me feel calm and peaceful. I love listening to the sound of the waves and birds. The reason why this beach, Palm Cove, is my favorite beach is because it’s so boundless, I guess. I can walk on the sand for hours until I get tired and still be overwhelmed by its eternity. I can sit on the sand as long as I want to. This is why Palm Cove is my favorite place.
How Would the Angels Describe Humans?

3F Ernest Kwok

Once upon a time, two starving travellers came to an impoverished village. They were too hungry that they didn’t even have the strength to walk or talk. They were so emaciated that if they fell, they would just break into several pieces like a vase. The first traveller was a woman. She had dirt all over her face and she seemed to have fallen into a pool of mud. The second one was a man. He had no shoes and had thick calloused feet. It seems that he had walked for miles barefoot.

The two travellers went to an old man’s house and grovelled for some food to eat. The old man said, “My fellow friends, we haven’t had enough food for months too. My grandchildren have just had a small piece of cheese for the last two days. I will ask the other villagers for food but their food may not be enough.” So the old man required all villagers to share their food. After all the food was gathered, it was enough for the travellers. All the villagers smiled. However, besides for the smiles, their remaining food was not enough for themselves yet they needed to suffer for months more.

Actually, the two travellers were angels sent by God to earth to write a report on humanity. The two angels were so pleased by the villagers that they wept. The two angels thought the people were so miserable but benevolent. They revealed their true identities to the villagers. They said, “We are angels from heaven. We have known that humans have mercy on poor people. We are so pleased for what you have done. Thanks a lot.” Then they went back to heaven.

One month later, the weather became marvelously good. The villagers had a memorable harvest. They harvested abundant food to eat; some of it was sold at a great price.

In the angels’ report, it said, “Humans are kind. They are generous and full of love. Helping those in need can make people feel happy and good things will come to them soon!”
The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him had been getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw.

The baby crocodile, David had crawled through the window into the streets! Sammy found out that he had accidentally left the windows open. He immediately dashed to look out the window, only to find that David was roaming through the streets, heading towards the kindergarten! Sammy bit his lips and quickly chased after David.

When he arrived at the kindergarten, his jaw dropped. He squinted his eyes closer, trying to find out if his mind was playing tricks with him. For David was viciously and violently attacking two men holding machine guns and wearing stockings over their head.

David lunged at one of them, biting the man’s leg ferociously. The man yelled, trying to kick away the crocodile.

David was flung up into the air and soared all the way to the kindergarten’s wall, slamming onto it. The man wasn’t better, his leg was bleeding and his gun was tossed to the side.

The kindergarten children and the teachers were huddled on the classroom floor trembling.

David cast Sammy a look and arose from the ground. Sammy seeing David’s look, instantly knew what David wanted him to do. He squatted down onto the floor and inched towards the machine gun nervously.

Meanwhile, David courageously flung himself onto the second one. The man was tossed down on the floor. Sammy seeing that the man was busy defending himself ran over and seized the machine gun.
Both the masked men were now bleeding on the floor. David released his grip on the man and tossed away the second man’s gun.

Sammy held the gun tightly, pointing it towards the two men.

Very soon, the police arrived. Sammy sighed, and it was finally over. He gave the gun to the police and walked off, with the proud crocodile’s head held high.

In the end, Sammy and David were awarded medals for their good deed and from then on, the Tong Kong Police Force started to take crocodiles to patrol around the city instead of dogs.

Tong Kong Estate was never the same again.
Dear Editor,

I’m writing to express my concern about the aggravating problem of our daily municipal solid waste disposal. A survey conducted by Greenpeace showed that more than 9000 tonnes of municipal solid waste was discarded in Hong Kong on a daily basis. It has become a pressing problem; our society must recognize this problem and alleviate it as soon as possible. However, the lay public still does not seem to be concerned.

As of now, the way to discard waste is to simply send it to one of the three landfills, which are going to reach their maximum capacity by 2020. Also, there isn’t even one incinerator in Hong Kong. The problem is that the government isn’t carrying out some feasible and effective policies to deal with the waste we create every day. Do you think our government imposes a levy on household waste? This matter has been discussed for more than a decade, but the decision is yet to be made. I personally think we can view other countries’ policies regarding this problem as a role model. Take Taiwan as an example, it’s doing extremely well. Their success comes from the polluters-pay scheme. The Taiwanese government charges ten Hong Kong dollars for every kilogram of waste produced by the public. This act does not only make their people produce less waste but it also leads them to look into the problem seriously. Throughout the process, public awareness towards environmental protection has sharply risen. That’s why I think our government can do the same, since this policy affects people’s daily life directly, that would be the most effective way to tackle the problem. And for a more long-term strategy, the government should start with educating the next generation that environmental conservation is of the utmost importance.

Another root of the problem is consumerism. Hong Kong is a prosperous city, our people tend to buy a lot more than is necessary. But not much emphasis is devoted to recycling used cans or buying just enough. In 2012, four million boxes of mooncakes were bought by Hong Kong people. That is an absurd number considering that there are only seven million people in Hong Kong. Greenpeace interviewed 278 people after the Mid-Autumn Festival in 2012. The result showed that on average a family bought more than 2.7 boxes of mooncakes but discarded 0.9 of them. Why do
Hong Kong people tend to buy so many mooncakes? Again, consumerism is to blame. Excessive consumption is a run-of-the-mill problem in Hong Kong. This is a result of both conspicuous and emotional consumption. People buy more than they need just to show off their wealth among peers in order to stand out. They also buy without thinking twice. The case of mooncake boxes is just the tip of the iceberg. This is a problem that needs to be resolved by the Hong Kong people, but this needs to start with education, which is a very long-term strategy. For now, suggestions have been made by society to carry out more short-term policies like campaigns and propaganda to raise people’s awareness over wasted mooncakes. Although this still doesn’t solve the root of the problem, it does alleviate the pressing issue.

At this point, several pressing questions need to be asked. What happens to the unsold mooncakes? Should they be recycled, donated or thrown away? Well, in the case of Wing Wah Mooncake Factory, the company directly throws away the unsold mooncakes. This is another example why Hong Kong has so much solid waste. The mooncakes themselves aren’t so much the problem, but the excessive packaging is. Mooncake factories apply unnecessarily luxurious packaging to mooncakes because they understand that people are appealed to the packaging to show off their wealth and taste. This again is consumerism at its worst. The best way to reduce the waste caused by mooncakes is to recycle the packaging, then donate it to people in need, but again this is just a short term policy. The best way to eradicate this problem is through education; we can teach the next generation about environmental protection. It is only through education that the whole mindset of a generation can be turned around. I believe that children are our future and I equally hope that one day our well-educated children can lead us to a greener future.

Yours faithfully,
Kan Tsang
Good morning everyone. Do any of you study history here? If you do, do you think it’s useful? It has been perceived that most students nowadays put a distain on the subject of History. Fewer and fewer students take History as their elective over the past decade. In 2003, more than 10,000 out of the whole 70,000 candidates took History in the HKCEE. But in the 2012 DSE, only around 7,000 students sat the History examination. It is obvious that there is a significant decrease in the number of candidates who take History as their elective and more and more undergraduates tend to study Business or Science subjects over Arts. As this is how our society’s business structure is developing, it is generally perceived that there is a higher chance for students to get a better job if they major in Business or Science subjects.

Even though it seems History is slowly being undermined in our society, learning History, indeed, is nothing but beneficial to us, not only to ourselves but to society and even the entire human race as well.

George Santanaya, a great philosopher once said, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” The best thing history brings us is that we can learn from our ancestors’ mistakes and by doing so, our lives can be a lot easier. We can reflect on their mistakes, and refine them so that we can avoid the wrongs our ancestors did in their lives. Historic recurrence isn’t just a shallow theory, it is a fact that can be seen throughout the course of history. We run around circles even though we don’t seem to be aware of it. A very depressing yet authentic example would be the genocides both by and of spiritual people throughout the ages, first the slaughter of Christians by the Roman Empire, then the series of terrorist attacks directed to the Americans by radical Islamists. The list goes on and on and this might seem irrelevant to us teenagers but these events remind us that we should never be hateful to people who are different from us. We should agree to disagree. Just as the late President of the United States, Mr. John F Kennedy once said, “If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe from diversity.”

Learning History is also very important for our society. It’s funny, even ridiculous how some governments realize that they are in the cycle of history, yet they still never learn from it. Ladies and Gentlemen, think about the series of revolutions called the Arab Spring that succeeded in swift regime change in the region just a few
months back. One very important theme, I think, across the whole of human history is that tyrants and autocrats will always fall in the hands of their own people, take the Qing Dynasty and the French Revolution as examples. Yet, the president of Lybia, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, still didn’t seem to understand it but continued to press his people. He squeezed every penny he could out of his citizens by low wages and a high tax rate. They would suffer torture if they even state their objections against him. Finally, this tyrant’s oppressive tactics could not silence his citizens anymore. Consequently, a revolution broke out. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi was eventually captured and executed by the very people whom he had thought to have complete control over. If he had looked into history, he would know his way of managing his country would destroy him. And maybe he would not suffer this tragic, yet inevitable end.

From a cultural perspective, learning history can preserve our cultural traditions, which is an amazing quality for our society as well. For instance, do any of you know why we have different cuisines in the world? It’s because every country in the world has different geographical positions, thus we have different types of food. Well, of course, food is not the only example; a more practical one is the Chinese traditional lion dance during Chinese New Year. This cultural heritage may not be the most practical for us, but it’s certainly some of the most beautiful things our ancestors have left us with.

Thinking on an even larger scale, the act of learning History has also a positive effect on our globe. Admittedly, our race always wages war against each other and lives are lost and economies are damaged. For example, the American Civil War killed over 150,000 people and cost over 3 billion US dollars to rebuild the damage. Even though it was a very tragic chapter to American history, the war was fought for a reason. It’s a moral lesson taught by the lost souls, it has proven that all men are born equal and free, no man should enslave others or be enslaved. This is a lesson that not only America but also the whole world has learned and remembered deeply. Ladies and Gentlemen, if we do not learn from this tragedy, then the lives taken would be lost in vain and our race would not move forward.

All in all, even though History may not seem to be as useful to us as Chemistry or Economics, we should look deeper than that. History is actually very practical to us, to our society, and the entire human race. Throughout the progression of mankind, even though our technology and knowledge keep on developing, it is certain that we
will encounter possible conflict. That’s where history comes in, it tells us of not only the successes but also the failures our forefathers. Just like the philosopher of China, Confucius once said, “Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” We learn from the rights and wrongs of our ancestors. So that our morals can keep up with our improvement in technology, and we can become more well-rounded people in the hope that we as a race, can march forth into the wonders of the future. Thank you.
Juvenile delinquency has become a pressing issue in our society. It happens not only in Hong Kong but all over the world. Although the latest juvenile crime rate is on a downward trend, it has still become a hot media topic. More about juvenile crime will be investigated in the following article.

We often read in newspapers that teenagers have been arrested by the police because of theft. It is indeed one of the most common kinds of crime that teenagers engage in. Another common type of crime is drug trafficking. Every year, many youngsters are charged with drug trafficking.

As everyone knows, the most apparent reason why teenagers are involved in those crimes is peer pressure. Teenagers care a lot about their friends. They tend to do whatever their friends do and never want to be singled out. Therefore, when their friends ask them to do something illegal, they will still do it in order to please their friends. The second major reason why teenagers get involved in crimes is that they want to show off in front of their friends. They want to show how fearless and clever they are to break the law without being punished so as to gain respect in their peer groups.

In fact, teenagers are too naïve when they come to consider the consequences of their actions. Some of them may think that they will only be charged with petty crimes in which case they will be placed under the Superintendent’s Discretion and will not get a criminal record. Even if they are charged with more serious crimes such as drug trafficking, they will only be sent to Boys’ or Girls’ Homes.

When teenagers are faced with peer pressure and are forced to commit crimes, they should always seek help from the school social workers. The social workers are willing to help them to solve their problems and if needed, will give them a referral to the relevant department for professional assistance. Teenagers can also dial government hotlines if they need more advice.

Teenagers must think twice before they act. Don’t commit crimes because of peer influence. Please bear in mind that committing a crime is one of the stupidest decisions you can make in your entire life. Why don’t you spend your time doing other meaningful things such as volunteering? Remember, stand firm and stay away from your bad friends!
Dear Pat,

How are you doing? It has been a long time since we met last year. Did you enjoy your holidays? As you know, it has always been my dream to be a volunteer, so I took up a job to be a volunteer in a rehabilitation clinic during the summer holidays. The aim of this rehab clinic is to help autistic children recover from their sickness. I gained a broader perspective on life through this experience. I would like to now share it with you.

As I knew nothing about autism, I needed to be specially trained before I participated in the work. The training was challenging and I encountered innumerable difficulties during the process. I got a packed timetable for training and I felt that I made a mess of things. Luckily, my colleagues and tutors assisted me to progress through the training and my skills were highly sharpened.

However, I found it difficult to communicate with the autistic children because they seldom talked. They didn't know how to express their feelings and opinions. It was quite challenging for me to understand their thoughts and make friends with them. I also found that their relationships with their parents were not very intimate and most of their parents didn’t have a clue about what their children were thinking. Well, as an old saying goes, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” I endeavoured to do my best and designed different games and activities to enhance the relationships between the parents and their autistic children.

Although this job was extremely tough for me, it brought me an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to communicate with my colleagues and become a good team player. Most importantly, I realized the significance of communication, care and love.

It’s time for me to stop. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours,
Chris
Annual Walkathon For Walk to Build

4B Julian Leung

Why take part?
Do you want to do something meaningful during the weekend? Do you want to help the poor children living in rural areas of China? If yes, there is a chance for you now. The annual Walk to Build walkathon will be held on 17 November 2013. This walkathon aims to raise money to build schools in China. In addition, you can join this meaningful activity with your family. So besides helping the poor students in China, it is also a good chance for you to enjoy a day out with your family. So don’t hesitate to join it.

The route of the walk
The route of the walk is to Ma On Shan Peak. All participants will gather together near the Ma On Shan Station at 8 a.m. This route provides a chance for participants to experience the route mainland students living in rural areas need to take to reach school. The length of the walk is about 3 km, so it will take approximately 2-3 hours to complete the walk. Participants can also enjoy the spectacular view of the natural scenery.

The work of Walk to Build
Walk to Build is a charity organization founded in 2008. The aims of Work to Build are not only to provide education for the poor children living in China, but also to improve their learning environment. We believe that education is the only way to help those poor children to break the vicious cycle of poverty. During the past few years, we have organized different charity activities such as a walkathon to raise money for the poor children in the rural areas of China. With the building of new schools and the providing of teaching facilities and resources, more children living in poverty can now attend schools and receive an education.

There is no doubt that poverty is one of the main reasons children are being left out of school. Education gives poor children the knowledge and skills they need to live better lives. So, what are you waiting for? Let’s join this meaningful activity and help those poor children. We need your support!
These days, many children are suffering from diseases that were once considered to be for adults only. One such disease is obesity. Nowadays, obesity is a common disease prevalent among children. According to a health report conducted in 2012, the problem of childhood obesity in Hong Kong is getting more serious. It is not difficult to understand why childhood obesity is on the rise.

The main reason for childhood obesity is children in Hong Kong have poor eating habits. Many children have unhealthy diets. They like eating high calorie and low nutrient food such as fried chicken wings, hamburgers and potato chips. Junk food is relatively cheap and can be easily bought in supermarkets and snacks machines in schools. This has meant that this ease of access to junk food has made it far easier than before for students to become overweight as junk food contains a lot of sugar, salt and fat.

What’s more, children do not have enough time to do exercise. Not only adults, but also children are living busy lives. Due to the competitive nature of the education system, children have to do a lot of homework and revision every day. Moreover, they need to participate in different kinds of activities or go to tutorial schools after school. Many of them do not have time to exercise. Most importantly, they would rather spend their leisure time watching TV and playing computer games than working out.

Finally, irresponsible parents are to blame as well. Many parents like their children to be a bit podgy and they do not see it as a problem. Also, many parents themselves have poor eating habits and thus fail to teach their children how to eat healthily. If children are not taught about the importance of having a healthy diet when they are young, they will eventually develop poor eating habits which are difficult to change. This is why plump children tend to become obese when they get older.

Obesity is a serious problem today but what can we do to solve the problem? First, children should be taught about the detrimental effects of obesity. There is a higher chance for fat children to have health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and heart disease when they get older. Second, parents should not spoil
their children. They should not allow their children to eat too much unhealthy food. They should also set a good example and help them to develop good eating habits. Third, schools should teach children how to make good food choices, ban the sale of junk food and provide more healthy nutritious food to children.

In conclusion, having a well-balanced diet, eating less junk food and doing more exercise are the crucial factors for a healthy body.
It Doesn’t Take Much to Lose Control!

4C Katie Leung

Drink-driving is a high-risk behaviour. It causes numerous accidents every year throughout the world. I myself used to drink and drive but I have now turned over a new leaf. Therefore, I am sharing my experience and hope the problem of drink driving will be eradicated.

I am now in prison. It all happened last Christmas. After having a party with my friends, I became totally drunk and drove myself home alone. I felt like I had total control until a little girl suddenly appeared from nowhere. Her father grabbed her in a flash and ‘bang’ I hit him hard. I lost consciousness, my arm and nose were broken. Yet, that was not the worst of it, I killed the man, the father of that helpless little girl, the breadwinner of the family. I was devastated and regretted what I had done.

There are different reasons behind drink-driving. First and foremost, most drunk drivers believe that they are immune to the effects of alcohol while others don’t know the legal drinking limits. In the short term, the government can suspend or even revoke the offender’s license to send the public a message that we have zero tolerance on this issue. In the long term, it will be helpful if the government can educate the public that drink-driving is socially unacceptable. Holding workshops and seminars can definitely raise public awareness as well.

Besides lacking the awareness of the grave consequences, drinking during festive seasons and personal problems are also the source of drink-driving. People drink and drive when they are in the thick of problems. Caught in one’s emotions and personal dramas, the person doesn’t care what happens. They are simply unaware of the harmful consequences. To deal with that, we should never send our friends out onto the road at the end of a party. As a responsible host, we can arrange to call a taxi or organize a car pool.

Drink-driving is like homicide on the roads, we should never turn a blind eye on this selfish behaviour. It’s better to be safe than sorry. Let’s put an end to this socially unacceptable behaviour. Stop Drink-driving!
Childhood Obesity
4C Marcus Fung

Many children nowadays are suffering from obesity. According to a survey from the Hong Kong Youth Service, more than 14,000 children have become obese in the past three years. There are many reasons for this growing trend and we should not ignore its consequences as it can lead to life-threatening conditions.

The poor eating habits are one of the reasons why childhood obesity has become more serious. Due to the hectic lifestyle of Hong Kong people, many parents do not have time to cook and thus children are brought out to have fast food. Besides, many children eat unhealthily. They always have snacks and fried food instead of fruit and vegetables. The high intake of high-calories and low-nutrient food will eventually lead to obesity.

Moreover, many children do not exercise regularly. Children spend most of their time on their schoolwork due to the competitive nature of the education system in Hong Kong. Even in their leisure time, they would rather spend time watching TV and playing computer games than do exercise. Doing exercise is no longer a part of their daily activities. Also, the lack of recreational and sports facilities in Hong Kong discourages children from doing exercise.

However, these lifestyles must be stopped. As children spend most of their time at school, it is vital for schools to recognize the important role they play in combating obesity. Junk food and soft drinks should be banned from schools and healthy food such as salad, fruit and other low fat nutritious food should be promoted. Also, the government should promote the importance of living and eating healthily such as organizing different campaigns in schools. On top of this, the government should build more recreational and sports facilities.

Childhood obesity is not a simple problem. It does not only physically harm the children, but has the potential to affect them psychologically. Children who are obese are always thought as lazy and gluttonous and this may lead to isolation by their peers. Therefore, the government and schools should take action without hesitation and parents should be good role models for their children and help them develop a healthy lifestyle with exercise and a nutritious, balanced diet. It is crucial for parents to provide a happy and healthy environment for their children as well.
In recent years, the problem of obesity has started to get the attention it deserves. Do you remember the fat boy Xiao Hao from Guangdong? He is four years old and one metre tall. However, he weighs 62 kg. He has been under the spotlight for months and this has left the public a question – is childhood obesity the tip of the iceberg or a ubiquitous phenomenon?

In Hong Kong, as we cannot get away from the hustle and bustle lifestyle, junk food has become part of our daily meals. Despite its low price and taste, French fries are soaked with grease and soft drinks are full of sugar and artificial chemicals. These ingredients and cooking methods greatly contribute to the reasons behind being obese – a condition that can develop fatal health complications such as diabetes, stroke and artery blockages and hardening.

Second, traditionally, some parents think a few extra pounds do no harm to kids, and chubby kids are cute. Unfortunately, this is a huge misconception. This belief actually instils our next generation with a false notion. In fact, when children have developed a bad eating habit, the habit will follow them for the rest of their lives. This means their health will only worsen unless there is intervention at an early age.

Third, the lack of exercises among children in Hong Kong is also to blame for this phenomenon. Working out is as crucial as having good eating habits. For instance, if a person lacks exercise, his heart may not be able to undertake harsh conditions, such as extreme hot and cold weather. At the same time, excessive calories will be converted into fat and stored around the internal organs, which in turn is nothing but bad news for your health.

After all, it is not impossible for people to change their habit if they intend to. Just remember what you eat plays a defining role in your health. People should cook their meals with healthy and fresh ingredients, like fruit and vegetables. Healthy food lowers your caloric intake and gives you energy in the morning. What’s more, regular exercise is a must for everyone. Building up a fit body can raise personal self-esteem and sweating takes away heavy metals from the body. All these prevent aging and strengthen your immune system. Besides, the government has the
responsibility to advocate the benefits of working out and as a consequence needs to build more recreation and sports facilities.

There is no doubt that children in Hong Kong nowadays live a sedentary lifestyle and have poor eating habits. So it is the duty of parents and schools to teach them how to keep obesity at bay, which means educating them in the importance of regular exercise and a balanced diet.
More than 25 million animals are used in testing each year, tens of thousands of wild and domesticated racing horses are cruelly slaughtered every year and 50 million pets are abandoned and neglected annually. Do these facts shock you? If they do, join me and say no to animal cruelty!

As an officer of the SPCA, I paid a visit to China last month to investigate the animal rights there. The situation is alarming. I documented the cruel and brutal ways China’s circuses train performance animals. They severely exploit and abuse animals. What they are doing is to fool people into thinking that performing animals are an acceptable form of entertainment. But in fact, it is a pure torture for the animals. Animals are supposed to be free. Yet, these performance animals are locked in cages and chained and only allowed to spend a little time in an exercise cage. The only other times they get to be outside of their cages are for rehearsals or performances. It is totally inhumane!

Other than circuses, horse and greyhound racing is another form of animal abuse in China. Around 800 racehorses die from fatal injuries every season. To keep horses racing through pain, they feed horses with pain relievers. These relievers numb pain but do not treat the injuries that cause the pain. Consequently, injuries get worse and they are sold to slaughterhouse. Dogs are bred either for consumption or racing. After several races, dogs that do not run effectively will be slaughtered. It truly annoys not only dog-lovers but also those who keep a pet.

Is there a skeleton in your closet? Fur is peeled off over the animals’ head while their naked, bloody bodies are thrown onto a pile of those who have gone before them. It takes up to eighteen red foxes to make on fox-fur coat. While people think wearing fur looks elegant, did they ever think of the origin of the fur? Witnessing the violent process of these animal products, I have vowed never to use any animal product!

Circuses, animal racing and animal products are just the tip of the iceberg. We should join hand in hand to stop these inhumane acts. You can make a difference by refusing to use animal products, betting on animal races and participating in animal performances. Respect animals, respect lives! Say no to animal cruelty!
Dear Editor,

I refer to the editorial dated 1st October in the Student Post. I am writing to express my insights on the question raised, “Do you think your parents really understand you?” As a youngster, I believe that I could illustrate the attitudes of parents towards young people appropriately. In this letter, I am going to focus on two aspects: staying out late with friends, and spending a long time on the computer.

Concerning staying out late with friends, my parents are open to this. After exams or a festival such as Christmas and New Year’s Eve, we often celebrate with friends in order to widen our social circle and relax from daily stress. My parents’ perspective is the same as my friends’ because they know I have worked hard in my academic study and it is perfectly fine to socialize with my peers. Also, we have conversations about my friends, so they consider that it is not dangerous to spend time with them. Although they may feel anxious about the fact that accidents might happen easily at night, there are ways to comfort them and let them understand I am in a safe situation. Contacting them, making a time commitment, providing information and so on can keep my parents calm and enable them to trust me.

In terms of spending a long time on the computer, my parents rarely complain about it. Due to having no computer in my room, I need to use the computer in the living room. Consequently, they will not suspect that I am playing computer games uncontrollably as it is easily for them to know that I am doing my homework. Instead of scolding me for using the computer for too long, they sometimes worry about my eyes’ health condition and advise me to rest frequently. It is very caring of them and they can really understand my situation.

To conclude, my parents can fully understand my difficulties and care about my feelings. It is inevitable that they show their concern, as they are our parents. Nevertheless, the importance of understanding lies in communication. When they know more about us, they will put themselves in our shoes and can understand us perfectly.

Yours faithfully,

C. Wong
Should We Allow the Sale of Pseudo-models’ Photo Books in the Book Fair?

4E David Tsang

13th August, 2013

Dear Editor,

Pseudo-models have kicked up a storm in our society. In this letter, I would like to respond to Ivy Ng’s letter and express my concerns on the issue. I agree with Ivy Ng about banning the sale of those photo books in the book fair. I do not think the models should be allowed to sell them in such a place.

Ivy Ng is quite right to state that the photo books of these models in the book fair should be allowed. Firstly, the book fair is meant to foster a reading culture. People should be provided with a chance to appreciate books of literary merit. However, the photo books of these models are racy and bordering on pornographic. They do not facilitate any cultural exchange. Moreover, these pseudo-models are only showing off their figures and they are not doing anything to foster a reading culture.

In my opinion, pseudo-models and their books should not receive such prominence. In fact, they have hijacked the book fair. The fans of pseudo models follow behind them and cause many problems and troubles. For example, because the fans rush into the hall without any order, they make the hall chaotic. The fans become gaga over their idols and shout out their names loudly. This disturbs the other visitors to the book fair. Also, they tarnish the international reputation of the Hong Kong Book Fair and Hong Kong itself.

Furthermore, the book fair should not descend to the level of a bikini party. There are children, families and teenagers at the book fair. These models, who are wearing bikinis or skimpy clothes, are reinforcing the misconception that women’s beauty lies in their appearance and bodies and women are to be looked at. These models divert people’s attention from books to the models. They ‘change’ the purpose of the book fair. It is ironic that it is the fans who come to the book fair but not book lovers.
In conclusion, pseudo-models’ photo books should not be allowed in the book fair and should not receive such prominence. The book fair should not descend to the level of a ‘bikini party’. Please, I think everyone can help to protect the book fair culture. Let us boycott these pseudo-models and their photo books to protect our kids!

Yours faithfully,

David

David Tsang
Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Do you think history is important to us? Although the answer is obvious, many youngsters in Hong Kong nowadays don’t think so. They don’t like History because they think it is outmoded and tedious. They prefer the science stream or business rather than history. Indeed, the percentage of candidates who quit History in the DSE is more than thirty percent in 2013. It indicates that fewer and fewer adolescents care about History. However, we can learn something important from the past.

Some of you may refute that history cannot be consulted with profit as we are living in a modern society. In fact, it is a falsehood. If we make good use of history, we can benefit.

We can use the Three Rs to remind ourselves of the importance of learning from history. First of all, reflection is the first step to the correct road. In ancient China, a philosopher Zeng said, ‘I examine myself daily on all the things I have done.’ He insisted on introspection every day and reflected upon his inadequacies. Zeng always thought about how people could be of noble character. That he reflected himself enduringly and pondered every day made him inherit Confucian and ultimately a legend. Therefore, reflection is a significant move to understand our deficiencies. History can allow us to reflect on our ethical shortcomings, so we can seek improvement towards moral perfection.

The second ‘R’ is review. Review is also an inevitable procedure to achieve illumination. Thomas Edison, an eminent scientist in the USA, failed to invent an effective light bulb after thousands of experiments. He found out the weaknesses of the past tests and reviewed them continuously. He analyzed the crux of failure carefully and sought a solution for the problem. Thanks to the lessons learnt from his past experiences, he finally invented a light bulb made of tungsten filaments. If Edison had not reviewed his past work, he would not have gained so many accomplishments. Since failure is the mother of success, we can cultivate our persistence and ultimately succeed if we study History. Remember, adolescents, it may be useful in learning too.
Refinement is the third ‘R’. Refinement is the last element to make a great stride. John Karl Gauss is a renowned mathematician in Germany. He was already curious about mathematics when he was young. At the age of twelve, he queried the geometric proof of Euclid’s Elements. He then investigated it and found that the proof was wrong. Years in, years out, Gauss ameliorated the theory and developed his mathematical analysis. Finally, he acquired the reputation as the ‘Prince of Mathematics’. It explains that we can make an achievement as long as we refer to history and refine our theories and findings.

Teenagers, please trust me, History is a very useful tool for us to use to improve. From history, we can make reference to feasible methods from the past and imitate them in the present. It will lead us down the road of success. On the other side, we can avoid mistakes made by our ancestors and use a different way to tackle problems. It may be an innovative method and receive windfalls. Besides, History can be the motivation and encouragement for us to do better.

Never follow the same former disastrous road. If we learn from history, we will be a wiser and more cultivated person. If the world learns from history, it will become more harmonious and well-developed. Not only is history a vital element of personal growth, it is also a stepping stone for world development.

Thank you.
Should We Allow the Sale of Pseudo-models’ Photo Books in the Book Fair?

4F Vincent Leung

27th September, 2013

Dear Editor,

Recently, Pseudo-models have kicked up a storm in town. Many people are arguing whether they should be allowed to sell their photo books in the book fair. Here, I am writing to respond to this issue and the letter from Ivy Ng.

Firstly, I strongly agree with the opinion of Ivy Ng. I suggest that pseudo-models should not be allowed to sell their photo books in the book fair as this will give teenagers and children a misconception about women’s beauty. In the book fair, pseudo-models always wear racy clothing to attract attention when they are promoting their photo books. It is what Ivy Ng meant by ‘turning the book fair into a bikini party’. Thus, teenagers’ and children’s minds will be polluted when they see them.

Secondly, pseudo-models’ photo books do not serve the purpose of the book fair. Their indecent photo books have low or even no literary value at all. However, the aim of the book fair is to foster a reading culture in Hong Kong and provide a platform for cultural exchange. I have no idea how those indecent and “pornographic” photo books and depicting models in skimpy dresses can encourage reading and facilitate cultural exchange. They only hook the ‘toxic men’ and stimulate sexual imagination.

Thirdly, pseudo-models disrupt the order of the book fair. Many teenage fans, ‘toxic men’ and amateur photographers are attracted by them and stop to take photos. The exhibition hall becomes crowded and they jam the corridors and thus turn the book fair into a chaotic scene.

In conclusion, pseudo-models should not be allowed to sell their photo books in the book fair as they pollute teenagers’ and children’s mind by giving a
misconception of women’s bodies, fail the aim of the book fair and turn the book fair into chaotic scene. Moreover, we want a platform for genuine cultural exchange, not a bikini party. Please, stop selling those photo books to save our book fair and our readers!

Yours faithfully,
Vincent
Vincent Leung
Dear Editor,

With the recent debates in the LEGCO regarding the finding of resolutions to solve the issue of landfills reaching their maximum capacity soon, the problem of solid waste disposal has become the focus of attention of the lay public. A survey conducted by Greenpeace showed that Hong Kong is one of the most wasteful cities per capita around the globe. It indicates that the challenge that we face is actually more aggravating and pressing than was initially perceived.

Currently, more than 9000 tons of solid waste is dumped in Hong Kong every day. Household kitchen waste accounts for an astonishing amount of 30% in total. Policies for tackling the problem, however, are passive and have a low sustainability in the long term. What are they? Landfills, sites used for the burial of waste and, which are approaching their maximum capacity soon are the means of disposing of water in the SAR. The Waste Charging Scheme is under consultation, so it is yet to bring improvement to the situation. The government attempts to stick to the status quo, which is stalling the deadline by expanding the area of landfills. Obviously, this would be extremely difficult due to the Not-in-my-backyard effect as no residents would like to have a landfill around them.

So, what could the government do? The Secretary for Environment, Mr. KS Wong, has to take action as soon as possible. A levy on household waste has been discussed for more than a decade, but a decision has yet to be made. Taiwan is a role model of successful waste reduction – not only do they use incinerators with advanced technology, but also expand the government’s list of mandatory recyclables such as including steel containers, dry cell batteries, electronic products etc. They are successful due to a well-rounded monitoring system and their determination to execute their policies comprehensively. Therefore, the Hong Kong government should put more resources into promoting and inculcating the consciousness of living green into citizens’ mind and alongside implementing programmes at the school level to educate the next generation on this issue.

Celebrations also contributed sizably to the large amount of municipal solid waste. Mid-Autumn Festival has just passed, and nearly every family bought
mooncakes during the festival. Unfortunately, nearly one-third of the mooncakes we “buy” actually head directly to landfills. Greenpeace interviewed about 300 people after the Mid-Autumn Festival in 2012 and obtained a result showing that on average a family bought more than 2.7 boxes of mooncakes but also discarded 0.9 mooncakes. Consumerism is to blame for this phenomenon. Due to this behavior of excessive consumption, people would rather buy extra than risk not having enough mooncakes. Apart from raising people’s awareness of buying the “right amount”, it might be effective if green organizations such as Friends of the Earth could collect mooncakes and give them to the needy in order to reduce the amount of waste we produce.

Actually, the mooncake factories should bear a heavier responsibility for those wasted mooncakes. As a profit making organization, it is of equal importance for these companies to fulfill their corporate social responsibility and not just pursue profits. They should take the initiative and donate any unsold products to the poor. Other than that, mooncake factories may look into redesigning their packaging in order to lessen the waste produced by the food packaging. After all, we are making our own planet suffer for every bit of waste we dispose of.

As a part of our own society, we should take part in facing the issue, along with factories and the government. It is about time we care for our environment, plan for our future generations and protect our planet. United, we stand. Divided, we fall. I wish to see a revolution, a new organized system dealing with the problem as effectively as Taiwanese model. I hope that one day, I could see Hong Kong take pride in its environment and that Hong Kong will have a better, brighter and greener future.

Yours faithfully,
Alix Lee
The Uncovered Treasure of History

4F Winnie Fong

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. What do you think history is? Would it be just piles of old and boring books, or is it simply about endless machine-like reciting? Indeed, the majority of Hong Kong students seem to have a stubborn prejudice towards the subject of History. From the records of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, we note that the number of candidates taking History in the public examination is rapidly declining from 14.4% in 2005 to only 8.7% in 2013. Science and business streams have become top priorities. Those subjects are thought to be more useful and practical in the real world.

In today’s society, History has become synonymous with boredom and worthlessness. However, if you are willing to explore more about History, you will surely find something precious inside. Unlike Science and Business, the knowledge you learn from History is not about techniques or concepts, but rather about the philosophy of living in the world.

I will try to explain the importance of History progressively: from the individual, to our society, and at last the world as a whole.

History is made up of different stories from different people. We can always deduce their attitudes from their rises and falls. Those attitudes, whether positive or not, can sometimes be our inspiration, pushing us forward, and sometimes they can be our admonition, helping us to review ourselves. Abraham Lincoln, who was one of the greatest Presidents of the United States, had encountered numerous failures. He experienced defeat in elections, failures in his business ventures and had suffered huge pressure when he suggested the abolition of slavery. But he did not give up at all. He stayed strong and insisted on doing what was right. The biography of Lincoln has taught us the spirit of persistence. When you are in a frustration situation and have thoughts of giving up, review the history of Lincoln fighting against all that life could throw at him, and you will get the power to strive again. History is definitely a great life mentor as it records the real experiences of human beings during the past several thousand years. It plays an important role in cultivating the mental quality of a person as facts always speak louder than vague theorem. Being our society’s future, you need to have yourselves well prepared and history will give you help in polishing your mental health.
You may be thinking that history deals only with only in the theoretical and is of no use in the real society. However, to integrate successfully in society we need we need to draw on experiences from the past, and that’s what history is about. Nobody can build up a successful career without experience. If you look through history carefully, you can find that history tends to repeat itself. When we can learn from the numerous past experiences, we can avoid making the same mistakes and it will be easier for us to reach the peak. Speaking in another way, history provides us with a short cut to success. “Those who don’t know history are doomed to repeat it,” is a well-said quotation from Edmund Burke, a famous Irish statesman. Throughout the five thousand years of Chinese history, the changes from dynasty to dynasty were very frequent. The original dynasty was corrupted and people suffered under the unfair policy of the government, making them start a revolution. However, at the beginning of the dynasty, it was the opposite of this situation. The country was prosperous and the people were patriotic. From here, we can see an important message behind this phenomenon: it is easy to build but hard to maintain. Every dynasty had a good start but slowly deteriorated as time went on. And every dynasty had the same flaws. Therefore, learning from history and avoiding the repeat of our forefather’s mistakes is fundamental for us to work in society and run a business. Ladies and gentlemen, after your graduation, you will have to face an unfamiliar new environment. Instead of learning from your own mistakes, why don’t you make your path smoother by learning from those made by others?

The application of History can even be extended to a global aspect. Nowadays, people yearn for world peace, and do you know the reasons behind this? From 1910s to 1950s, there were two world wars. The world wars brought huge destruction and harm to people and left an unrecoverable scar in people’s hearts. Over a million people were slaughtered during the wars. The environment was destroyed and polluted. The Japanese especially suffered when two atomic bombs were detonated in 1945 to end the war. After the two wars, we learnt that violence cannot solve problems but only destroys ourselves instead, and we have realized the beauty of peace. That’s why during the Cold War when the United States and the USSR were in a strained relationship, no one dared to start a war like the previous world wars. Instead these two superpowers tried to compromise with each other. History has reflected the consequences of war and as a result we have learnt not to take the same path as in the past. And that is the wisdom of history. It can inspire you to build a better world for future generations.
History is actually a dictionary that records all the experiences of our forefathers. We need to learn from others as well as learn from our own past, so we can create a brighter future for ourselves. When you have the courage to uncover the dull appearance of history, you will dig the treasure beneath the surface and the wisdom behind will definitely benefit you throughout your lifetime. You are all young and I believe you have got plenty of time to build your fruitful future from the uncovered treasure of History. Thank you!
Think Twice! Never Be a Juvenile Delinquent

4F Jeff Yu

Juvenile delinquency has been a serious problem in Hong Kong for some time now. Many teenagers commit different kinds of crimes because of different reasons. However, they do not thoroughly understand the consequences and the pitfalls of juvenile crime.

One of the most common juvenile crimes is shoplifting. Many teens feel a sense of thrill after stealing something from shops and running away. Many of these teens have underestimated the consequences by believing that shoplifting is just a petty crime and they will not be punished too heavily. But the fact is they may be placed under the Superintendent’s Discretion or they may even get a criminal record. This can ruin their futures, as no one will trust them anymore.

In addition to shoplifting, drug abuse is also a prevalent form of juvenile delinquency. Teenagers take drugs to seek momentary excitement. Some of the drugs such as cough syrup are highly accessible to teenagers and as a result, it makes the situation worse. Once teenagers are addicted to drugs, it becomes very difficult to help them kick the habit or to prevent them from relapsing into drug abuse. After taking drugs, these young drug addicts will experience mood swings and oftentimes, their communication with friends and parents will break down.

Despite the effects juvenile delinquency has on teenager life, there is still hope. The Juvenile Protection Section provides alternative ways to straighten out troubled teenagers by focusing on the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. Those delinquents are given a second chance and are allowed to get a new lease on life.

Apart from the Juvenile Protection Section, teenagers can turn to social workers or teachers for help. As the saying goes, prevention is better than the cure. Social workers and teachers can chat with them and give them timely help. They can often give enormous support and counseling services to teenagers.

Although juvenile delinquency has been a serious problem, there is much help available in society. Be strong and tough. Love yourself and stay away from crime!
Dear uncle,

How are you recently? It has been a long time since I last saw you a year ago in Macau. How’s your life? I hope you are of sound body and are having a wonderful life in Macau.

Last Friday, while I was shopping with my schoolmates in Tsuen Wan, I saw a poster outside the Rainbow Community Centre inviting people to rent stalls at the Chinese New Year Market. How amazing it is! I told my peers that I wanted to run a stall in the New Year Market and all of them showed intense interest in my proposal. We intend to donate some money to Pui Ching Middle School for the construction of a brand-new multi-functional building. As we are alumni, we hope students of Pui Ching can enjoy a comfortable and advanced learning environment. Knowing that you’re also an alumnus of the school, I’m here sincerely asking for your sponsorship.

We’re going to sell sunflowers at the market. As the Chinese New Year is approaching, people should be imbued with hope during this joyous festival. Sunflowers, being the symbol of hope and optimism, will make people feel gleeful and full of anticipation. Additionally, the scent of sunflowers can make people feel relaxed and calm, creating a harmonious atmosphere. That’s why it is the best choice to sell sunflowers during the Chinese New year. It surely will be an unforgettable memory for us.

We’re going to invest approximately $5,000 on the stall. As for the rent, we’ll need $3,000. We also need $2,000 for the sunflowers and last but not least, $700 for the decorations to make our stall stand out.

“Failure is the mother of success”. If the stall loses money, I’ll definitely reflect on the experience and learn from our inadequacies. Furthermore, I’ll return the money you sponsor us as soon as possible.

“To give is better than to take.” I hope you will give a hand and sponsor us. Please let me know your decision and reply. Thanks a lot!

Regards,

Aaron
Cross-generational Love

5A Andy Yiu

I was on the MTR playing a game on my mobile phone when a huge man started quarreling with a tiny old lady standing in front of me. At that time, the MTR compartment was nearly empty because peak hour had already passed. “My bag fell on the ground because of you! How inconsiderate you are!” the old lady complained. “It is not my problem. Stop making a fuss of it, you are really annoying!” the man replied.

As the huge man was talking with a gross attitude, the old lady was relentless in asking him to make an apology and come clean about what had happened. I was quite indignant at the lady because she kept cursing the young man in foul language as loud as thunder. I tried to focus on my game but I had already been tormented by their deafening voices. Some foreign tourists on the train also stared at them who were no doubt tarnishing Hong Kong’s image. “Be brave man, just say sorry for what you’ve done,” the lady exclaimed. “Don’t be crazy! I’m not going to say it!” the man insisted.

Their argument soon intensified when the man pretended to hit the lady forcing her to shut up, so I rushed forward to be an intermediary. “Calm down guys. I witnessed the whole incident and lady, you should be more forgiving. Also, you’ve already breached the regulations since speaking foul language is prohibited on the MTR,” I explained in my sternest voice. “I’m not going to dispute with you anymore, coward!” the old lady shrieked. At last, the lady’s demands amounted to nothing.

“You’re really nosy,” the lady howled from her throat. At the time she was scolding me, she was knocked down by a stranger again. All her personal belongings fell out of her handbag. “What is the matter with me today? How come I’m so unlucky?” she mumbled. Meanwhile, there was a man helping her to pick up her stuff. She was speechless as that man was the huge man whom she had scolded before in the compartment. “Why are you helping me?” “I am helping you because you really need a hand although you wrongly accused me just now,” the huge man explained with sincerity. Looking at the old lady, I could see admiration glittering in her eyes. It was as if sparks were materializing in the air. I did not know what would happen next, but I hoped that there would be a good ending.

After a few weeks, I came across them at the MTR station. I could not believe that they were hugging and kissing each other. I was overwhelmed with shock immediately. “Hey! I think you two should explain what’s happening,” I greeted them with a grin. They told me after that day, they unexpectedly encountered each other...
on a blind date. They got to know each other better and discovered that they had a lot in common, in spite of their age difference. Since then, they went on dates and fell for each other gradually.

This is the most amazing love story that I have ever heard. From my perspective, love should not be hindered by age. As long as there is true love, cross-generational love is totally acceptable. Now, I believe that the world is always blessed with miracles.
Thank You, My Inspirational Teacher!

5A Cary Chan

Having gone through 80 years of its history, our school is a successful organization that has nurtured numerous outstanding students. Many alumni have become reputable celebrities, while some others strive to contribute to our society in their own ways. With such successful fruits, the hard work of our teachers should not be ignored or forgotten. Their effort must be honored and remembered. As a current student at our prestigious school, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the most inspirational teacher that I have encountered in my school life, a teacher who has illuminated me with his thoughtful teaching on various occasions.

Being professional in their teaching subject and having passion in teaching are the prerequisites of a good teacher. Mr. Lo, my favorite teacher, definitely possesses both of these qualities. Teaching Liberal Studies, which is usually perceived as a complicated and troubling subject, in an interesting way is no doubt a challenging job. Yet, Mr. Lo always tries his utmost best to make his lessons as enjoyable as possible by explaining ideas, concepts and phenomena with his body language and attractive voice. I enjoy his lessons very much as he is capable of turning every topic into an interesting theme, just like a magician swaying a magic wand.

In order to equip students with the required knowledge and skills for the coming HKDSE, Mr. Lo often spends a huge amount of time teaching us some impeccable examination skills for writing organized and well-elaborated essays conscientiously. He also provides us with useful comments on how to improve our work. Therefore, we can learn from our mistakes, break our bad habits and strive for better performance.

Not only does Mr. Lo indoctrinate students with knowledge, but he also takes care of students as if they were his own children. While studying, students always need abundant encouragement and appreciation. Mr. Lo understands this and always stands by his students. With his genuine support, students have the confidence to aim for better academic results. I remember that once he said he treasured diligent students more than the smart but lazy ones as the former always have the better attitude for bigger improvement in the long run. I am sure that most students have experienced moments when they feel frustrated about studying. Mr. Lo always shows up at the right time to show us his unconditional support, and students in turn will be driven to move on and go forward.

Mr. Lo is a passionate teacher, but also a close friend. He plays these roles well by sharing his everyday experience with us and teaching us about the importance of
caring about what is going on in our society. When he taught us about modern China, he shared explicitly his personal experience of traveling to the Mainland. Through discussing matters about our country, we are inspired to look at people and things in a more objective and critical manner, and this is definitely one of the impacts that Mr. Lo has made on his students.

I am delighted and grateful that our school has such a good teacher, a man who can really inspire students in different ways and is the role model for students. He treats his job as a mission to nurture the next generation. With his presence, students' growth becomes fruitful and meaningful. I am indeed very fortunate to have had the chance to be one of his students and I will not let him down. I will strive to achieve great success in whatever I am going to pursue in my life.
Dreams

5A Jacqueline Wong

Everyone has dreams, no matter you’re a man or a woman, aged or young, black or white, rich or poor; we all have dreams of our own. But what exactly are dreams? If you check up the dictionary, you’ll probably get quite a few meanings. In brief, dreams are visions, beautiful visions, and are somehow intangible. Basically, dreams are what we desire.

Dreams can be goals and aims; they can also be certain things we just hope to happen. Some people dream big dreams, while some dream small ones. I, myself, have had innumerable dreams. When I was still a kid, I dreamt that Peter Pan would pay me a visit during those sleepless nights. I dreamt that we could spread our wings and fly like carefree birds, to Neverland, the second star to the right of the sky.

Just like all other kids, in my younger and more spontaneous years, I was given a piece of writing titled ‘My Dream Job’, which was certainly a classic. I can hardly recall what my dream job was since it is ever-changing but still I’m pretty sure that by that time, dreams were big.

As I grow older, my dreams grow smaller. I yearned to be an outstanding student with excellent academic performances; I itched to shine on stage, accompanied by a thunder of applause; I pleaded for prince charming who would pledge an everlasting love. Cynically, wishes upon the stars fell like raindrops. I wonder why our parents and teachers always encourage us to keep chasing dreams when they can foresee the depressing endings. Then I came to the conclusion that most of our splendid dreams just belong to the night and that wishing only ruins the heart.

Unsurprisingly, I had been living a life of a realist for a while after all those disappointments. To that previous me, dreams were nothing but fairytales. They wither like grass and fade like flowers; here today and gone tomorrow. I learnt to give up and I stopped dreaming. I set about a new motto – living in the moment. It did not seem a bad thing after all. Things were fine for quite a long time, probably a few months, but I finally came to realize that a man without dreams is a man without a soul.

I felt so lost, doomed and hopeless once again after the awakening. With and without, I was a dying man. I looked upon the sky and there were only a few stars. I just wondered where the other stars had gone. Yet, the few stars alone were enough to light up the dark and the few bright stars brought back my dusted dreams. The ice in my heart melted, as if someone stepped into my world to bring me back to life.
Undeniably, not all dreams can come true. Nonetheless, they are not wasted. They keep us alive. When you feel battered by life’s storms and you are filled with doubt and dismay, dreams are your light. Dreams can guide your way back home. Whether the dreams can come true eventually should not be emphasized, instead, how dreams lead your way is of utmost importance.

Over and above, we should always dream big. As the saying goes, it is not in the stars to hold our destiny, but in us. No matter how weak and powerless we are, with sincerity, perseverance and determination, some day we can achieve our aims, attain our goals and fulfill our wildest desires.

Additionally, striking a balance between dreaming too much and not dreaming is also crucial. When we’re too absorbed in all the future goals and wishes, we will not be able to concentrate our minds on the present moment. It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live.

Dreams are stars in the sky. Without the stars, we would live in complete darkness; without the darkest night, though, we can never notice the brightest stars. May dreams save people from the mist, just as a splash of colour can instantly brighten and transform a black-and-white world.
How people dress themselves is fairly crucial in society, as it can in a way represent a person. As the poet Ian Serraillier once mentioned in his poem “Prisoner and Judge”, people easily trusted the man who dressed as a judge instead of a prisoner, without knowing who the man really was. On the other hand, appearance is not all a person is about, so is judging people by the clothes they wear the right thing to do?

Undoubtedly, people who dress nicely have a better chance to leave a laudable and remarkable first impression in others’ minds. It is pretty understandable as when people first meet, they are most likely to notice how others look and they will appraise this person according to their impression. Furthermore, it is a norm to wear certain kind of clothing and dress properly in specific occasions. For instance, it would be considered disrespectful to appear shabbily dressed at others’ weddings. Also, through a person’s clothing choices, we can partially perceive that person’s character. For example, conscientious people tend to dress neatly. Not to mention that some clothing items will provide protection and identification for certain professions, such as the police, doctors and surgeons. Therefore, judging people based on their appearance can actually enable us to understand them better.

On the other hand, how a person looks is only a part of who they are as there are diverse components in a person’s characteristics. Take a normal teenager in a uniform as an example. There are a million possibilities of who they are. They may be an intelligent inventor, or a gifted dancer or a caring volunteer. Appearance is only a tiny part of a person. Moreover, people can deliberately design their look and trick us into thinking they are a different person. In that case, how people dress may mislead people and we could not tell their true color. More importantly, if a person truly cares about you, they will focus on your ability, personality and best of all, your individuality. On account of that, how we dress cannot reflect who we are and people should not judge us by that criterion.

I think how the people react in the poem is understandable since the first impression can directly affect people’s opinion but if they learn more about that person, they will start to know them better. At that time, they will be able to identify whether that is a trustworthy person. In my opinion, we can hardly avoid judging people by their appearance but that should end after the first sight. People can dress the same but inside they are all unique. Therefore, we should not judge people by what they wear; instead, we should scrutinize and observe that person before coming to a conclusion as to who he or she is.
Are Clothes Important or Not?

5B Annette Chan

As the poet Ian Serrillier was once said in his poem “Prisoner and Judge”, if the judge put on a wig and robes, people would believe that he is a judge. If he dressed like a prisoner, people would think that he would not be a judge.

Many people think that the first impression is very important, because it reflects identity, social status and background. For example, when you are having an interview and you dress yourself smart in a suit, you will have more opportunities, because you look like a professional.

The second reason that clothes are important is to show that you are respecting the occasion and the host. Because if you wear suitable clothes in a right place, it can tell people that you show decorum. It is just like you will never wear slippers to a wedding party unless it is held on the beach. So choices of clothes are really important for various occasions.

Besides, many people need to wear uniform, such as doctors, students, police, pilots, flight attendants, and so on. Wearing a uniform can reflect your identity and job nature. It is easily recognizable. Uniforms can also improve team spirit and sense of belonging. Also, it can be convenient for others to communicate needs. People will immediately turn to the policeman nearby when there is an accident.

On the other hand, people always judge others by appearance and form stereotypes. People will discriminate against the janitor, the scavenger and mainland immigrants. It is because people think that they are dirty, impolite, less educated and with a low income. People do not like to help these kinds of people and it may lead to social disharmony.

Moreover, clothes do not reflect internal qualities and abilities, such as knowledge, education and character. Just like when a student does not wear a uniform when he or she is on holidays, it doesn’t mean that he or she is not a student. A nurse never wears his or her uniform at home, but he or she is still a nurse.

In my opinion, I think clothes can be important or unimportant. It just depends
on how you think. When you need to go to party or school or work, you should wear a party dress, a uniform or a suit. But when you are having a holiday, why don’t you wear something that can make you feel comfortable.

We should not judge or discriminate against people for what they wear; it is as superficial as the prisoner mentioned in Serrillier’s poem, so clothing is not the most important facet to weigh people after all.
Nowadays, people are judged by the clothes they wear. That’s true. Because if people do not know or recognize you, the clothes you wear will be their first impression of you.

There is no denying that people’s clothing is the first thing which people will use to stereotype them. It only shows their own social status. Also, clothes do not reflect internal qualities, including knowledge, experience, education and the skills that you have. These qualities cannot be revealed to people by the appearance.

However, most people will judge by appearance, because the clothes can project various images, including your position and authority. Also, clothes can give people a first impression, which can reflect a person’s identity, social status and background. If the clothing is good or suitable for finding jobs, you will probably get more job opportunities. Moreover, good clothing can show that you respect the occasion. For example, we need to wear a suit to attend the wedding ceremony to respect the bride and groom. We need to dress tidily to respect the host.

We can take Ian Serraillier’s poem, “Prisoner and Judge” as a reference. The prisoner needs to wear prisoner’s clothes and go to the court. Then people will know that he is the prisoner. They will think the prisoner is the sinner who cannot be spoken to. Everyone will have different opinions of him if he wears different clothes. This is what we called the “first impression.”

It is universally true that inner qualities are important, but poor first impressions are difficult to erase. So, if you want people to respect you, you’d better don better clothing and groom up.
A Horrible Android

5B Keith Chan

One night, Sandy invited me to have dinner with her in her house. Since we were in the same secondary school, we recognized each other. But we had lost contact for a while, that made me feel weird because she suddenly called me at night.

After a few days, the date with Sandy came. When I arrived at her house, she was preparing some food in the kitchen. So, I just gently helped her. Suddenly, the knife that I was using slipped and cut Sandy on the hand. When I looked at the cut I was shocked to discover that, instead of blood, all I could see were wires, electrical circuits and computer chips. If the knife cut the skin of a normal human being, he or she would have sustained an injury. But Sandy had just felt nothing at all. She stared at me and rolled her eyes, I started to discover that Sandy was an android. At that moment, this situation promptly made my jaw drop.

Sandy's eyes started turning red scarilly. It seemed she was now activating some devices, maybe now analyzing her injured hand. But her hand was seriously damaged. She just could not repair it as soon as possible.

Because of my carelessness, I discovered she was an android. Suddenly, a knife was thrown at me in a spilt second but it missed its intended target – me! That moment I realized that she was not the real Sandy. I frantically ran and hid in the wardrobe so as to cleverly shelter my body. She started roaming the house and scanned everything in terms of temperature. She targeted me.

Luckily, the boiling water in the kitchen had a higher temperature. She thought that was me. So, she just used the knife to poke the bowl. At that moment, I used my customized weapon to hit her violently. The android was damaged fatally.

I ran out of her house briskly and called the police. The police were shocked. They protected me for 48 hours and kept me safe. The police were now searching for the real Sandy. Now I could sleep restfully.
An Inescapable Robotic Fate

5B Samuel Cheung

Tomorrow would be Sandy’s birthday. Therefore, today I helped her to prepare some food for her birthday party. I was using a knife to cut some fruit. Accidentally, the knife that I was using slipped and cut Sandy on the hand. I shuddered and apologized immediately. Moreover, I ran to get some plasters to stop the bleeding. When I was back, I focused on her hand and I was frozen with fear. I could not utter a word.

“Please don’t tell others. Please,” Sandy begged me.

Instead of blood, all I could see were wires, electrical components and computer chips.

I asked, shocked, “Who are you? Are you that Sandy I knew?”

“Sorry, I can’t tell you much about this. Can you promise me not to tell anyone?”

I didn’t answer her and I fled the flat immediately.

One day, I was roaming on the street. Suddenly, someone knocked me unconscious. When I woke up, I discovered I was in a gigantic container. There was no light, only total darkness.

A voice appeared from my back, “You know too much kid. You need to pay for that.” Then he laughed sinisterly. Then I lost my consciousness again.

I opened my eyes and I felt that the sunshine was dazzlingly bright. I saw some figures and words in the air but I couldn’t touch them. I tried to remove them but I failed. A man came to me and said, “My name is Dr. Evil. I have transformed your body into a cyborg through an operation. And now you need to follow my orders!”

I wanted to escape from this nightmare but I couldn’t! I could not even control my body. I couldn’t move!

“Don’t be silly. You’d never flee from me. You are my slave now. HAHAYA....” Dr. Evil laughed sinisterly again.

Afterwards, I yielded to my destiny. I learnt to live as a cyborg. Dr. Evil planned to destroy and conquer some countries like China and the USA but I was indifferent to it. I just missed my Mom and wanted to see her one more time.
Observation or Evidence?

5C Erik Chan

Having nothing to do, I went to the tribunal in the vicinity of my home yesterday morning. Hardly had I entered the building when I saw a prisoner walking round the prison yard and a dressed-up judge. As the session was about to start, a growing number of bystanders were inside the court. After a while, the session started. Having a similar mind set, the bystanders in the court and I did not trust the prisoner who possessed a low forehead and cruel eyes. On the contrary, we all trusted the judge having wise looks and learned eyes. To our surprise, the prisoner was eventually acquitted. For sure, I believe in the judiciary system of Hong Kong and I did not go to great lengths to find out why this prisoner was not sentenced to imprisonment. However, this has made me repeatedly ponder if I hold a prejudice towards the prisoner. This case shows that people do judge others by the clothes they wear and how they look. This phenomenon is known as ‘stereotype’.

Stereotyping refers to a fixed idea, which many people hold firmly to but which is often not true in reality. My judgment on the prisoner and the judge are two vivid examples showing stereotypes of prisoners and judges.

First and foremost, stereotyping can help humans make quick decisions and judgments. It is a speedy way to gauge a situation, especially in a new circumstance. Take the poem “Prisoner and Judge” written by Ian Serraillier as an example. The writer can identify the prisoner having a low forehead and cruel eyes were unreliable without a second thought. He, simultaneously, concluded the judge with a deep forehead and learned eyes was dependable. Stereotyping is not only a quick way to determine people’s integrity, but it also assists in distinguishes one’s nation by his complexion or one’s strengths by his stature in a timely manner.

Apart from the ease of making decisions, stereotyping can also help people’s judgments a little more effortless. It is the most direct way to make sense of a situation. For instance, students will not play tricks on teachers in school since teachers are serious in their mind. In addition, people can recognize the seriousness of soldiers by their military uniform or the cleanliness of nurses by their white uniform. As a consequence, stereotyping can help humans solve a host of difficulties.

Even if the advantages of stereotyping benefit our lives, holding stereotypes entails a few disadvantages.

Stereotyping is a highly inaccurate tool that has a tendency to mislead people by encouraging them to make wrong judgments based on misguided and incorrect
details about the subject under review. People's stereotype can be wrong before they comprehend the fact. In the poem "Prisoner and Judge", the prisoner was considered to be untrustworthy. Yet, he was found to be innocent. The writer should not judge the prisoner’s credibility only by his clothes. He should in fact do the opposite and understand the condition first. If not, people may have to live with the consequences of having made a wrong decision.

Furthermore, stereotypes are generally negative before people realize the truth. It is because they are the first impression of people that frequently reflect negative false truths. This may thus create an "us" and "them" attitude. Stereotyping will likely divide people in distinct categories at school or in workplace.

Last but not least, stereotyping should not be reinforced. As an idiom goes “A book cannot be judged by its cover”, people should not judge others by observing the clothes they wear and the appearance. Contrarily, people should distinguish others with evidence and dispel stereotypes as well.
People Are Judged By the Clothes They Wear

5C Joey Lai

There are different types of garments and fashion and the different clothes demonstrate difference between the cultures, styles, social classes and genders of a person. Can we recognize other’s abilities, knowledge or personalities by merely judging their clothings?

Undoubtedly, judging people by the clothings is simply a fact in our lives. It somehow reveals others’ characters. Indeed, the President Candidates are dressed by their political consultants. The Hong Kong Chief Executive, Mr. C Y Leung, tried to promote he was a person who was concerned about the citizens. When he ran for the candidacy of the HKSAR chief executive, he wore a rolled shirt in order to produce a diligent image and it was a success. We tend to judge people by the way they look. Also, it does not involve a moral issue but a physical one, because the clothes attract our brain’s attention immediately. According to a research from the University of Hong Kong, our brains are impressed by others’ clothing at the first meeting. Judging people’s clothing is not a moral issue and it is simply reflecting our natural instinct with people we first meet.

However, clothes do not necessarily reflect who people are and we should not judge a book by its cover. The former Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Commissioner, Timothy Tong, had admitted that he had received a gift as much as HK$200,000 from mainland judicial officials in 2007. He usually wears high-end shirts and ties in public, making us feel he is a professional of great integrity. In fact, clothing can be a disguise, not reflecting who they genuinely are. There are other cases. In Europe, thieves dress elegantly in order to escape the police’s attraction. If the police distinguish the thief by their clothing, the theft definitely cannot escape. Certainly, the police usually identify the thieves by their clothes and that is why a lot of thieves are able to escape. Physical appearance does not necessarily correlate to people’s characters. If we do, it will make us miss the talented but welcome the criminal. So, don’t stereotype people by their clothes, otherwise you will miss a talented person.

In my opinion, looks aren’t everything. Cameron Russell, one of the world’s top models, works for Armani, Victoria’s Secret, Prada and the like. She has been a high-ranking model for over a decade, and once she had made a speech in public,
saying “Image can be transformed in a minute. It is powerful but superficial.” Even a model, who used to bring public a funky image, doesn’t agree to stereotyping people by their physical appearance or clothing. Image is not the most important indicator for personality. We should not merely pay our attention to people’s clothes. According to Ian Serraillier’s Poem, “Prisoner and Judge”, there was a man who transformed from a prisoner to a judge just by changing the clothes. Stereotyping others’ character by their clothes is silly. Even a rich man himself will not always dress smartly in order to reflect he is rich all the time. Clothes cannot reflect others’ social class, personalities or knowledge. Consequently, do not judge people by clothes.

Stereotyping is a phenomenon that makes us miss those talented people and waste the chance. So, do not classify people by their clothing. Clothes do not relate to people’s abilities knowledge or personalities. Give equal opportunities to everyone. Be aware the power of image!
Should We “Judge a Book By Its Cover”? 

5C Karina Chan

“Don’t judge a book by its cover.” It is a metaphorical phrase which means you shouldn’t prejudge the worth or value of something by its outward appearance alone. But somehow, nowadays, as a saying goes, “Apparel makes the man.” It means when people dress up, making themselves look like what they want to be, people will think that they really are what they represent. So, are people judged by the clothes they wear?

Physically, people are judged by the clothes they wear. People can’t help it, we are predominantly visual creatures. When we look at the wrappers in which things come wrapped in, it not only affects our interests in a powerful way but also stirs us to react from the inside. It is true to some extent with the way we react to people. For instance, if an employer wants to recruit an employee and hundreds of people apply, they will probably narrow down the list based on their first impression. In other words, employers are judging them by their “cover” in order to save time. However, when time passes, a person’s actual personality and character can alter these conclusions but before then our conclusion often remains highly biased. It means we should not only judge a person by what he wears but also by what he or she says does and thinks.

Formally, people use a uniform to identify someone. They will know their identity by seeing what they wear. For example, when people see a policeman in uniform, they will show their respect to the policeman because of his contribution to society. This case reflects that people judge others by what they wear. Undoubtedly, this is only a partial phenomenon. Haven’t you heard about a saying “a beast in human clothing”? Some fashionable people have no integrity at all. There was some news about a pope in Vatican who admitted to pedophilia and molesting kids by confession. This kind of news happens every day. And it proves that we shouldn’t “judge a book by its cover”.

In addition, people dress up to gain peer recognition. Starting from puberty, people have the sense of self-esteem. Therefore, the way people dress can reflect their character and personality. Usually, girls who dress themselves in sexy black attire are stereotyped as rebellious juveniles so people may think all girls who dress this way are unruly and disobedient. But you can’t take part of the whole. Fashion is
a personal choice. It expresses a person’s taste and fondness. Whether a person has
good or bad taste doesn’t affect his or her potential or work ethos. So should you
judge people by the clothes they wear?

As poet Ian Serraillier once mentioned in his poem “Prisoner and Judge”, when a
man dressed up as a judge, he was trustworthy but when he dressed up as a prisoner,
people despise him. People will judge a person by the clothes he wears due to their
preconceptions. From my point of view, despite the first impression, we should also
comprehend a person in detail because the first impression is too superficial and
unreliable. Moreover, we should always have introspection. As the Bible has
mentioned, “Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye but do not
notice the log that is in your own eye?” Sometimes people easily judge others by
their clothes, when they are different from themselves and begin to feel threatened
by this difference. They may then become hostile. Appreciation instead of judging
can eliminate conflicts and hatred.

In conclusion, we judge people physically, we judge people by uniform and they
want to have self-esteem and uniqueness. But a person’s ability, character, integrity
and the sense of being chic can’t be judged by the first impression. So I reckon that
we should reflection introspectively and value others so as to know them from their
heart.
Silence loomed upon the starry night, barely annoyed by the rustling wind. Under swirling darkness the ocean moaned, and with gentle tenderness she patted the coast, bringing him to a peaceful nap.

“Cheers!” plunging into dizziness, Jace jostled the wine bottle with his drunken friends under the pitch-black sky. Once again the whisky trickled down his throat to cure his thirst, a thirst not for alcohol, but a thirst to drown himself, a thirst to paralyze his soul from resentful memories. He felt his veins burnt, felt his stomach churning, yet the pain buried in mind could never be removed. As the waves hummed along the shore, he darted down the beach, feeling the urge to wash away the bitterness, the bitterness far too much for a child to bear.

The ocean was massive, and as the scowling wind greeted his cheeks with a hard swipe, he recalled all the torturous moments watching his mum suffer – his beloved mum beaten up by the monstrous man she hated. Tears streamed down his reddish cheeks and his pulse tightened. She didn’t deserve it.

‘Jace! Please... oh... son... please come back!’ just then his mum came from behind, desperately pulling her son out of the water. Even in dim sight Jace could see the bruises all over her body, and with a deep sigh he uttered, ‘Get, away, from, me.’ His mother as if used to the tone, insisted, ‘Please, darling,’ with her eyes widened with plea, she then continued, ‘you’ve drunk too much ... let me drive you home.’ she reached out to hold his arms, ushering him back on to the beach.

‘I said leave me alone you old bird! You can’t even look after yourself!’ No longer capable of controlling the anger he slapped his mother with a stiffened fist and bellowed.

Her cheeks swelled into a reddish cone as water splashed all over her body, sending an icy fear deep into her pumping heart. Jace poured even more wine into his mouth, and this time it perpetrated through every tiny bit of his flesh, every tiny bit of his mind and soul. He felt like sinking, felt weak with his trembling legs. His vision blurred, and the final sound he could hear was the sirens. At last he got what he wanted, a detachment from the world, and from his very consciousness. The next second, he was lying on soft grass, with a cobalt blue sky head above.

He had been there before. Bolted upright, he saw the ever-so-familiar lavender garden outside his old house, the place where he had last smiled, last tasted
sweetness of life. Wrapped in warmth he saw himself cuddling in his father’s arm, his mother resting on soft grass. That moment would have lasted a lifetime, he told himself, as he once again witnessed how his dad was trapped by the cold-blooded flame, when a sudden furious fire came all the way burning his favorite purplish lavender to ash - the very scene before his dad died. He saw sweat dripping down his forehead, saw how he had not given up till the very last breath pouring water out from within. He was a hero. Jace stayed shocked, with tears swelling his eyes.

As if sensing his sorrow, the picture slowly vanished into mist and the apartment he had since been living in emerged from behind. He stepped in the narrow flat as he saw himself, still young as a child, greeted his stepfather with bare coldness. He saw how the stranger had started abusing and threatening his mum whenever enraged, and started the everlasting nightmare. His mother was always bruised, and he hated her that way. He hated his family.

Hatred blurred his sight, and the vision again drifted to the night he punched his mother hard. He was dragged into absolute guilt as he witnessed the fight, himself so ridiculously drunk and sent to the hospital bed. He saw himself lying down, his mom grasping his hands, sobbing with drowsiness. Afraid to have exposed himself, he stood quietly in the hospital room and glared at his mum. He knew deep inside he loved his mother so badly, so badly he actually hated her to have married the man who never stopped hurting her. He thought much, when slowly he saw wrinkles and moustache appearing on the “other him”. His mom had shrunk into a smaller figure with grayish hair dangling. There were blossoming flowers a second ago and now it was snowing outside. His breath tensed as the seasons repeated through the window with suffocating pace, as he gazed down at his palm with folded lines, and felt the beard on his chin. He himself was getting old as well ... it just couldn’t happen.

“Steve?”

A chill surged upon his throat as he turned around and faced his mum.

“Um...” Clearly mistaken by his own mother, he blushed.

“Jace, look who has come to see you darling, it’s your best friend Steve,” his mother mildly patted his hands and whispered.

“Oh, yea, um, Mrs. Wayland, has he got better?” He gave a look at his fainted own self on the bed, feeling strange.
“No, Steve,” she carved a weak smile, then continued, “But he will get better. He’s a tough man now.” Her soothing voice had driven him emotional, so he quickly turned back to the window.

“Where is Mr. Wayland? Isn’t he supposed to be here?”

“Oh um...he doesn’t like visiting the hospital.”

“Should have known about that.”

“Sorry?”

“Oh nothing. It’s just that Jace seldom mentions his stepfather. Are they ... happy living with each other?” There was a pause, then she replied. “Not quite, Steve. They somehow argued a lot. But you know, they’ll get along sometime ... when he wakes up ...” Jace took a quick glimpse at her, noticing her weary eyes had been slowly filling with slight tears.

“Mrs. Wayland?”

“Yes?”

“Are you happy living with him? Your husband?”

Obviously feeling strange to have been asked such a private question, she took another pause. “Well we are ...” starting to sob, she answered, “We are quite happy with each other ... thanks for caring.”

“But how come he hits you a lot?” He grabbed her hands and pointed at the bruises. His mother gasped and tears started rolling down her cheeks.

“Those are ... well once I fell down ...”

“Fell down the staircase? Is that what you said?” Jace yelled, not able to slow down his temper. “Is that what you do? Keep denying every time he hurts you? Why don’t you fight for yourself? You have been bruised all these years and you still don’t see the problem? Come on! Leave him!” Jace had blurted out his anger embedded all those years, and was finally relieved.

“Because I care about my son! My husband earns enough for his studies, pays his food and supplies his daily needs and this is all I need! I earn so little and our lives were difficult. My son needs his money for his future; I need the money for him; bruises are nothing to me. I love him very much but ...” she burst out crying, “but for
all these years he has seemed to have hated me and ... I have been such a bad mother ...”

Watching his mother left he sinking onto the floor. With all those years he hadn’t understood his mother’s love and sacrifice for him, and now they were both old. As time ran short, he dashed through the corridor to reach his mother. She, as if getting older with her every step forward, was slowly inching towards the never-ending corridor. Jace sped up and with all his might he caught his mother’s hands. “Mom, it’s me, it’s Jace. I’m Jace! I’m sorry for being so ... so bad to you for all those years and ...”

“Steve? Why are you calling yourself Jace? You are Steve!” Mrs. Wayland said with confusion.

Suddenly the world spinned as light shot through the curtain.

“I’m Jace! Mom! I’m Jace!” Jace opened up his eyes on the hospital bed, finding himself grabbing his mother’s hands. His mother yawned and greeted him with a morning smile. “Morning honey ... it has been a really long night.”

“It was a century to me.” Jace reached for his chin, assuring himself that he wasn’t bearded.

“Strange ... I dreamed of Steve ... and he said he was you ... ha-ha silly boy ... and he asked a lot about you.”

“Really?” Jace grinned, holding her hands more tightly, and all he ever knew was to love his mother with all the time he’s got.
I was utterly dumbfounded and raised my eyebrows at the sight. It was not only that I had inflicted wounds on her, but also the unexpected sight of wires and the computer chips in Sandy’s hand. Being presented with such a sight, it would be hard to persuade anyone to believe that a human being was constituted by those electrical components.

“Ryan, calm down! I am fine,” Sandy comforted me.

“But ... you have suffered a major injury to your hand. More importantly, there are wires and computer chips protruding from your hand,” I pointed at the wound with terror, whimpering.

“It ... is only make up, I have simply kept abreast of the trend of experimenting with special effects on my hands,” she stammered and pretended to bind her wound so as to flinch from my questioning and doubts.

Her fluster sparked my disbelief. I began to suspect Sandy of concealing some truths from me. I stopped sobbing and analyzed the current situation objectively. The most possible and sensible answer was that she was an automaton. Nevertheless, it was difficult for me to believe that my confidant was an android. Therefore, I was determined to unveil the truth hoping that there was no anatomical difference between Sandy and me.

The next day, I plucked up the courage to tail Sandy. She furtively went to a disused factory in the suburbs and deliberately took a tortuous and longer route. I peered through the window to scrutinize the interior of the factory and discovered that there was a mysterious woman wearing a black cloak whispering to Sandy. As a consequence, I nestled my ears against the factory’s door to eavesdrop what they were saying.

“Has the project been executed successfully?” the women murmured.

“There are some obstacles to further progress. A bossy guy has almost exposed our conspiracy,” Sandy replied.
“Discretion is the better part of valor,’ you must be cautious. Eliminate the people standing in the way of our plan. If the military discovers that we fraternize with the enemy to use artificial intelligence to rebel, our plan will absolutely fail,” the woman said anxiously.

“A revolt is going to happen!” I was totally speechless and my jaw had dropped open. What could I do? Should I report it to the police? I was completely caught in a dilemma.

At that moment, a familiar cliché was suddenly ringing in my mind. “Ryan, you must distinguish right from wrong. You must place righteousness before family to report to the police.”

Eventually, I called the police and the criminal gang was apprehended. Sally and the woman were sentenced to death. I seemed to have betrayed my friend, Sandy, but I have defended justice and forestalled a palpable riot.
An Imaginary Horror

5C Sophie Cheung

When I looked at the cut on my friend, Sandy, I was shocked to discover that, instead of blood, all I could see were wires, electrical circuits and computer chips.

“Sandy...what happened? Are you kidding me?” I was utterly dumbfounded. It was so hard for me to say these words. Sandy was momentarily petrified, but then began to sneer and use a mocking tone...

“Yeah. Finally, you know, I am an android. Don’t call me Sandy anymore, that awkward and notorious human name! I am the majesty of automaton!” She chuckled and showed me a lofty expression. My mind was full of darkness and doubts, and I really wanted to persuade myself it was only my imagination. Woefully, the feeling happened to be veritable.

While still in deep thought, I suddenly received an electric shock. Sandy took out an electric control panel from her stomach. “From now on, you are my servant, and I am your boss!” Sandy announced ferociously.

“I need energy to maintain my electric body. All I need are diamonds. You, go and get some for me!”

“I can’t afford to buy diamonds,” I whispered.

“I don’t care whether you can afford them or not! Just go and get them tomorrow. If you can’t do it on time, I promise, your family will have to bear the fate as you!”

What a devilish speech! I was panic-stricken by such threatening words and surrendered. I volunteered to sacrifice my reputation in order to barter for the safety of my family. “Don’t hurt them... I will do it for you...” I sighed.

Seriously, I was struggling between righteousness and evil. I used to be a law-abiding citizen. This was quite outrageous for me. There was still a lot for me to pursue in my entire life. I still have numerous big dreams to accomplish. Aiming not to be arrested, I needed to map out a sophisticated robbery plan.
Due to my lack of experience and skills, I went to a bookshop to search for some crime novels. Besides, I went to watch some suspense films. Already possessing an acquired diversified knowledge on criminology, some ideas started to appear in my mind. To make my robbery go smoother, I explored all the jewellery shops located in Kowloon, the New Territories and on Hong Kong Island. After my observations were completed, a jewellery shop called “Jewel Sparkle” located faraway on Hong Kong Island stood out, as it wasn’t located in a popular tourist spot. Consequently, “Jewel Sparkle” was unfortunately chosen by me.

Night finally came, the sky was a bluish black and not a single star not the moon was held in the sky. Well, maybe God knew my sinful intention, not giving a thread of light to reassure me. I took all my tools and got into a taxi, arriving at the jewellery shop “Jewel Sparkle”.

As I had expected, the pathway near the shop was completely quiet with neither people nor cars. I waited patiently in the coffee shop nearby, using my telescope to observe the shop and calculate how often the security guard would patrol.

Time’s up. I left the coffee shop and walked towards “Jewel Sparkle”.

“Please bless me, God!” I breathed deeply.

Putting on a mask, I felt like I was a robber appearing in novels and films.

“One, Two, Three!” I sprinted towards the display window with an axe and smashed the window. Glass flew everywhere. The alarm system was about to “yell”. I took out a huge bag, pounced on the display window one by one. At galloping speed, I grabbed four boxes of diamond rings containing five hundred or more diamonds.

“Oh my goodness!” I thought. There was some light approaching the shop. I immediately fled and hid behind the truck.

“The thief has gone!” the security guard yelled.

I returned to Sandy’s home. Strangely, no one was at home. I lied down on the kitchen floor, recalling the adventurous experience. I could say, being a robber gave
no advantage to me. I had to bear the possibility of being apprehended. Even though my guilt could be concealed, it was difficult for me to forgive myself. It would stay in my heart ever after.

“Everything will be alright tomorrow ...” I knew I was reassuring myself. Suddenly, something solid and sharp stabbed my stomach; blood kept gushing out ...

“Lalala ...” I was woken by the alarm clock.
The Most Charismatic Teacher

5D Alex Chiu

In every student’s school life, there must be a teacher that you remember for your whole life. The teacher may have changed your life in some way, or the teacher may have affected you in subtle ways that you are not aware of. To celebrate our school’s 80th anniversary, I would like to share my experience of being a student of Mr. Cheung, a teacher at our school who I like the most.

Mr. Cheung is my English teacher. He is as tall as a door and because of his height; he is an amazing basketball player. Every day, he wears a tie to school as he insists that it is a way to show his professionalism. Mr. Cheung is an optimistic person who encourages students to try their best with his positive energy. During English lessons, he sometimes shows us interesting videos and shares insightful articles with us so as to help his students learn in a more authentic and effective way. In addition, he is also very efficient with his work. He is always the first person to return test papers and assignments to his students.

At school, Mr. Cheung is a charismatic role model that everyone admires. As a teacher, he is respected for his flexibility because he always understands the pressure that students carry on their shoulder during busy months. He is also very accessible at school because he can conveniently be reached during lunch hours and after school so that students can talk to him and ask him questions whenever they need guidance or assistance.

I am lucky enough to be his student. Last year, he encouraged me to take part in the Speech Festival for the first time. I ended up coming second in the contest with my performance. It was an achievement that I had never thought would happen to me. Without Mr. Cheung spending countless hours to practice with me, I would not have done so well in the competition. When I was in junior forms, I constantly felt ashamed of myself. However, having entered the Speech Festival for the solo verse contest and having done well in it, I have now become more motivated and brave. I have also become more interested in improving my English skills.

In my humble opinion, a great teacher should have plenty of patience, as teaching is a job that does not reward you within a short period of time. A good teacher should also be a role model for students to follow as a teacher’s behavior.
sets the example for students. What’s more, a teacher should also be efficient and
good at time management so that he or she can cope with the countless number of
duties that he or she encounters on a daily basis.

To me, Mr. Cheung is a great teacher as he possesses all of these qualities. I will
never forget such a good teacher. How he has changed me as a person and the
examples he has set for me will be remembered eternally.
Without the Will, Tutorials are Nothing

5D Michael Lam

Nowadays, tutorial schools’ advertisements are omnipresent in Hong Kong. No matter where you go, or what transportation you take, there will always be some advertisements in distinct sizes of different tutorial schools. As students think that tutorial schools are indispensable for their academic results, such a notion causes tutorial schools to become prosperous businesses which will probably grow in the foreseeable future. However, is it veritable that tutorial schools are crucial for students these days? In my opinion, it is just a falsehood. I would like to start by explaining the major reasons why students are enthusiastic towards tutorial classes.

The major reason is that these tutorial schools’ advertisements frequently exalt their teachers as if they are presumably the superior teachers for a specific subject in Hong Kong. Some of them even state that a 5**, which is the highest grade in the public examination, will be guaranteed. In virtue of students’ apprehension towards the imminent public examination, students will not give up any methods which can potentially increase their chances or abilities to achieve a 5** in the public examination. When students are enticed to join the classes, their decision to enroll will influence others. Thus a herd mentality will be formed. For instance, when student A signs up for a tutorial class, student B will think that it will be a loss for him if he does not do so. Eventually, student B will also sign up for it and continuously influence students C and D and so on. This explains why more and more students are going to tutorial schools these days.

When talking about the significance of these tutorial schools, the reasons why I think they are not as essential as they are labeled are as follows. Firstly, there are actually no differences between the lessons of tutorial schools and the lessons of regular schools. Since the senior school’s curriculums are designed by the Education Bureau, all candidates have an equal opportunity to study for their examinations. There will not be any materials that can solely be obtained by joining specific tutorial schools. There is no reasonable explanation for students to explain why they join tutorial schools as the course material received is nearly identical to that of regular schools.

Secondly, tutorial lessons may also bring negative influences to students. On the one hand, some students may believe that their tutors’ hints are the keys to
achieving good grades, and therefore put a lot of effort into them by reciting these hints. As a matter of fact, they may answer similar questions by simply reciting these hints, while these hints are not actually the correct answers. On the other hand, some students may overemphasize the effectiveness of the tutorial classes and abandon the school’s curriculums. It is detrimental to students’ learning process and they may also miss some basic but vital concepts. That is to say that tutorial classes are not indispensable for students since they may even influence them negatively.

To sum up, tutorial schools are not as necessary as people incorrectly think. David Ambrose, who is a famous British novelist and screenwriter, had once said, “If you have the will to win, you have achieved half your success; if you don’t, you have achieved half your failure.” One’s achievements depend on one’s attitude. To achieve a 5** in the public examination, a good and positive attitude is way more significant than tutorial classes. Instead of spending money on tutorial classes, it is definitely a sensible way for us to set a goal or ambition, and build up our own attitude and confidence.
Judged By the Clothes They Wear?

5D Oscar Chow

Do you disdain someone when you see him or her in shabby clothes? People in Hong Kong usually do. I disagree with this thinking. This is a stereotype. It is really an acute problem. Nowadays, people always judge others by clothes. For example, when people see someone with dyed hair and wearing outlandish clothes, people will stigmatize them as a bad boy or girl and think that they are not trustworthy.

Wearing decent clothes offers some advantages. First, it will make a great first impression, for example, wearing different clothes can show the different backgrounds and social status of the wearers. If you are a well-dressed man in a suit, people will think you are aristocratic. If you wear a suit for an interview, you will get more opportunities to get a job. Respecting the occasion is also a reason that one needs to wear decent clothes. On a formal occasion like a wedding party or a ceremony, we should wear a formal suit, but not tacky, bizarre clothes. If we wear a strange shirt, people will stigmatize us as a misfit who defies manners. The third one is wearing a uniform. Policemen, doctors, students or nurses need to wear uniforms. It is a way to identify their profession. Wearing uniforms can also improve the team spirit and a sense of belonging.

By the way, I think that judging people by what they wear is not suitable, for it brings some disadvantages. First, judging people by clothes is a stereotype; it is a type of discrimination. For example, a janitor will think that he is an imbecile. People will hold the janitor in disdain as for being inferior. Then, if the janitor takes out the uniform and changes it into an elegant tuxedo, people will think that he is intellectual and professional. This concept is obviously wrong. According to a poem written by Ian Serraillier named ‘Prisoner and Judge’, a prisoner is despised by everyone. After he wears the clothes of a judge, everyone trusts him. Second, judging people by clothes can’t reflect their internal qualities such as knowledge, experiences or level of education; we should not look down on someone that wears shabby clothes, we need to respect everyone and know a person fully. The chance for deception is also a serious topic, for example, a thief dressed as a well-dressed man to rob unsuspecting people. Others will not suspect him because he looks like a gentleman. Judging others merely by clothes will encourage people to behave hypocritically.

In conclusion, judging people by their clothes is not objective or accurate for stigmatizing and discriminating people by appearance is unacceptable.
The Teacher Who Changed My Life

5D Tiffany Chik

“Not all people have a healthy mental health, especially adults. I had depression over the past few years for numerous reasons, but I tried my best to overcome it. When you are down, you need to do the same thing. Step back, reflect and then move forward. Life is like that.” As I recall, this is what Mr. Chan once said to comfort me outside the English Staff Room when I was going through a difficult time.

Mr. Chan, an alumnus of our school, is an associate with our school who is responsible for training students for the Inter-school Mock Trial Competition. He is a thought-provoking and enthusiastic teacher with a strong sense of humor. He is also a teacher who is able to attract students’ attention as his lessons are always enjoyable and inspiring. His sincere teaching attitude hence makes us put our trust in him.

For a few days, he observed in class that I did not pay attention as I would normally do. I revealed to him after school one day that I was upset as my best friend abandoned me. Because of my depression, I even had suicidal thoughts during that week. Also, my depression blinded me to the rights and wrongs. I was betrayed by my best friend and thus my faith collapsed. There was no way for me to build trusting relationships with others because I thought the more faith I had, the greater the disappointment would be.

Soon after that, Mr. Chan offered his words of consolation after hearing my confession. Having understood my lack of motivation and direction in life, he said, “You are the most important part in your own life. Life allows you to slow down, stop or even move backwards when it is deemed necessary. What matters most is that you have to believe that you will always find a way to walk out of the darkness and dash forward after feeling lost.” I was deeply touched by Mr. Chan’s sentimental encouragement. Since then, I have always reminded myself to leave all negativity behind and reach forth into things that truly matter.

To me, a teacher should be knowledgeable, positive and unbiased. A good teacher should never demotivate students but try to give them confidence and encouragement while attempting to understand their needs. Mr. Chan is more than just a typical teacher. He is a clown that makes us laugh, a social worker that solves
our emotional problems and a guest invited to share with us. He will always remain in my heart as a gorgeous teacher who provides students with unconditional support and treats us as if we were his own children.

Thank you, Mr. Chan, the great teacher who has changed my life!
A Marvelous Teacher Who Will Always be Remembered and Honored

5E Constance Choi

Do you think a good teacher should be exquisite? Or do you think a professional teacher should be all rounded? In this time and age, being an educator in Hong Kong has become an extremely challenging task. Not only should a good teacher have the cognitive skills of a psychologist to solve the many kinds of problems that students encounter, but he or she also has to be an all-rounded person who is able to tackle various kinds of obstacles. What do you think are the indispensable elements of a fabulous teacher? I would like to share my opinions and experience while also taking this as an opportunity to show my gratitude for an important teacher who has changed my life in more ways than one.

The teacher that I love the most is Ms. Lee, my Chinese teacher. She is a tall and skinny woman with long hair. Appearance wise, she is a very charismatic lady who can attract people’s attention with ease because of her gorgeous looks. As far as subject knowledge is concerned, Ms. Lee is a master of Chinese and Chinese culture. She also possesses rich knowledge of Confucianism and Taoism. What is amazing about her teaching is that she is capable of explaining society phenomena by referring to traditional Chinese values. She is very good at helping students understand various kinds of profound theories by using simple language. This is one of the major reasons why I admire her so much.

Besides the teaching aspects, another reason why I think Miss Lee is a great teacher is her passion in comprehending students’ thinking. Unlike some teachers who tend to teach in a one-dimensional manner, Miss Lee is very concerned about adolescents' mental development. She believes that mental health is vital to every student. Thus, she puts tremendous effort on studying teenagers' behavior so that she can relate to their problems and hopefully help them solve their problems effectively. So far, many students of hers have been affected by her and consequently try to become better under her encouragement. Many students, including me, love chatting with her and regard our conversations with her as lessons from which we can learn a great deal.
From my point of view, a good teacher should not be all about having outstanding semblance, but should also be well versed in the subject he or she teaches. Moreover, teachers should also not parade his or her previous academic achievements. They should be humble and have an open-mind to also learn from their students. Most importantly, a good teacher should be able to grasp the mentality of today's youngsters and relate to the perplexity in their growth.

Miss Lee will always remain in my memory as my favorite teacher because of her knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching. The role that she has played in my life and the impact she has had on me will never be replaced or forgotten. Therefore, I will always be grateful for having had the opportunity to be one of her students.

Thank you, Miss Lee!
A Teacher to Be Remembered

5E Gloria Au

Every day after school, he rushes out of the classroom – not to make his way home but to the Teachers’ Office at school. On his way, he is never by himself; rather, there are always swarms of students alongside him. They flock to the Staff Room to see him not because of punishment but their eagerness to talk to him in person to seek further explanations on different subject matters. Mr. Lee, the most diligent and respected teacher I have ever met, is this person. In celebration of our school’s 80th anniversary, I would like to take this golden opportunity to praise and give thanks to this highly admirable role model of mine so that his effort can be recognized and honored.

Mr. Lee, who every student admires, has taught Chinese in our school for over 30 years. He is a diligent teacher full of passion and patience in teaching. After every lesson, Mr. Lee stays in the classroom to answer students’ questions until everything is clarified. What’s more, Mr. Lee holds a daily “Chinese Clinic” after school for students who need help. With his great teaching, Mr. Lee’s students never feel worried because they understand that any problems that they have will be solved under Mr. Lee’s guidance.

To me, a good teacher should be one who understands the importance of practicing pragmatism. Mr. Lee is all about efficiency and effectiveness. In his class, you will never find any trace of color-printed notes, fancy booklet covers, eye-catching PowerPoint presentations or entertaining jokes. Instead, what you get are crucial things such as examination techniques, fundamental concepts and righteous worldviews. Some students may think his teaching methods are outdated and boring, but to me they work like a charm.

As far as qualities of a good teacher are concerned, perseverance should be an indispensable element that is vital to a teacher’s success. Take Mr. Lee as a prime example. Not only does he answer his students’ questions by sacrificing his personal time, but he also welcomes his students to submit extra work to him for marking. He has taught in such a passionate way for the last 30 years and he does not seem to want to stop. He does things his way for one and only one reason – to make his students learn and grow.
When I hear Mr. Lee’s name, I can’t help but think of his enlightenment. The most impressive thing I have learned from him is the importance of hard work. I used to be a mediocre student in class but he never abandoned me. He simply reminded me that practice makes perfect and encouraged me to never give up.

I would like to take this chance to give my sincere thanks to Mr. Lee for his effort, for without his teaching, I would not have been so motivated to strive in the coming public examinations. Not only students, but also novice teachers, should learn from Mr. Lee’s way of teaching.
The Awakening
5E Isaac Tsui

Act 1

I struggled to look up.

I was in a dark room. Not a single ray of light, not a single hint of warmth. I watched my own breath curl upwards in a mist of white, weakly making its mark in the razor sharp dusk before dissipating into the crisp autumn air, leaving behind no trace of its pathetic existence.

The claustrophobic room contained the basic essentials of life: a sink, a small bedside closet containing various items, and a filthy toilet bowl at the end of my cot. It bore an unnerving resemblance to a prison cell.

Opposite where I lay, an imposing metal door dauntingly stood guard to the only doorway out. Meals were pushed in through a narrow slot three times per cycle. Occasionally a pair of grey eyes peered through the vision port, silently observing, watching.

I knew not nor cared for why I was here. I was dreaming. The same dream I have been dreaming since time immemorial. Every time I went to sleep I awake within this cell. No method would warrant me escape from the dream. The only way for it to end was to let it run its course, and I would wake up and live through another day, only to resume my reverie that night right where I had left off.

Time passed, with me relishing in the fact that this was only a sleep induced fantasy. In a way it granted me hours of solitary time, a rare commodity during school days. Eventually I curled into a ball in the bed, as if the sheets that separated me from the real world were an impenetrable barrier instead of a wafer thin sheet of surplus-grade fabric.

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My new classmate Kaye shook me vigorously on the shoulder. “Dude, Math lesson was over a long time ago. You can wake up now.” I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes. The outline of Kaye’s figure blurred in against the background. I fumbled around my hollow mind for words. “Wha- What time is it?”

“History.”

Sure enough there was Mr. Poon droning on and on and on and on in the background about the Thirty Years War, or was it the Forty Years War? Was there even a Forty
Years War? I groaned as I slumped back on my desk. There was a *squelch* as a thin film of perspiration glued my crossed arms to the laminated wood. I suppose I should have thanked her for waking me up, but even the prison cell would be better than this. There was some semblance of order in the darkness. At the very least the bare cell offered nothing for my ADHD-plagued mind to be distracted by. The sheer amount of distractions in the buzzing classroom made my head pound.

My train of thought was abruptly derailed when Kaye smacked me in the back of the head with a dictionary. I was seeing double as the entire class turned to admire the drama, doing a poor job of suppressing their snickers.

The teacher looked like he might stab me through the heart with a pencil. “Good, you’re awake. What’s the answer?”

“P-Pardon?”

“What is the answer to the question?”

I was panicking. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Kaye’s index finger curl upwards.

“One?” I replied unconvincingly.

The teacher raised an eyebrow. “The third American president is... ‘One’?”

There was a roar of laughter in the class and I buried my head in my hands once more. My face burned so much I felt I would burst into flames any second. Or tears. Kaye’s face turned red with mirth. Not as red as mine though.

“You should stop sleeping during lessons. You’re less boring this way.” Kaye said amidst uncontrolled giggling fits. My heart skipped a beat. I looked up.

“Yeah, I think I can do that.”

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**Act 2**

My field of vision sharpened.

I was back in the cell. Raindrops pelted at the sole window chaotically, like a malfunctioning metronome, an orchestra embarked on a never-ending quest to annoy.

In the time I have spent in this cell I slowly began to understand that my only true allegiance was to myself, as I should have understood a long time ago. Life became so much easier when the incessant whining of others no longer concerned me. Freeing myself from the trappings of empathy left an excess of analytical power for more
productive tasks.

Naturally, I was much more intelligent than before. The cell walls were covered in graphs and diagrams. I scrutinized every human act around me. No conspiracy escaped my watch, though these I kept to myself, for there were facts that people refused to admit.

A bowl of gruel was pushed through the slot. Even in my dreams there’s no escaping bad cafeteria food, I thought to myself as I wolfed down the cold grey mush.

The pair of grey eyes watched warily behind the vision port, behind the security provided for by three inches of reinforced steel.

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“Shut up.” I fired off at my friend as I made a vain attempt to concentrate on my Math homework. Already we were receiving dirty looks from the school’s notoriously easy-to-aggravate librarian. But alas, Alex droned on.

How we ended up as friends was a long and complicated story; literally involving a spilt glass of milk, robotics; and a long, bloody power struggle in the Scouts, a story which in itself could easily span several thousand words. Hence it would suffice to say simply that I would be stuck with him for the rest of my middle school (because our school insists on using an incorrect term) career.

In the understanding that my Math assignment was not getting anywhere we left the school grounds for a coffee break, meeting up with Kaye so that Alex could pester her instead.

With Alex around completing any homework with any degree of efficiency was out of the question. Therefore we talked.

Light-hearted chit-chat quickly turned morbid with my involvement. Alex the mentally challenged chatterbox, preferring conversations that do not necessitate thinking, kindly left the table.

“You know, Kyle.” Kaye began, breaking the stagnant air left behind by the previous round of discussion. “You should brighten up a little bit more often.”

“The ability to be happy is but a flaw of design. An inefficiency,” I said with a light smile. Those who truly know me, however, would know that I was only half-joking.

“Have you seen the world out there yourself? Maybe you’ll see that the world isn’t divided into bad people and worse people. Cheer up, you’ll never find a rainbow if you’re looking down.” It was an awkwardly phrased argument, but she got the point
across.

“The only logical direction for anyone to go is forward. There isn’t any time for distractions. It’s how success is achieved.”

“Happiness is a shortcut to success.”

“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.”

“I know... but Kyle, I worry about you. You’ve been becoming more and more like a zombie for the past four years. You can’t be like this forever.

I felt her hands holding mine.

“You like science, don’t you? You said that science changes its views based on what is observed. So try to see the world in all its glory. Stop being an obnoxious, condescending jerk for just ten seconds. I know you understand.

“I want you to be happy.”

She was right. Kaye had hit me in the head with a dictionary once more.

I began to tremble as my self-established view of the world, my self-perceived eloquence slowly disintegrated into fine dust to be brought away by the wind. My mind seemed to burn within my cranium; I was silently enduring the painful process of recasting everything about me. Bathed in the furnace fires of internal turmoil, I saw myself beginning anew, living without pretense, without fear of rejection. I was not cold and calculating as I’d hoped to be, that simply wasn’t who I am. My mask had begun to stifle, and it was time to take it off.

“All my life,” I began slowly “People have hated me for whatever reason.” The lights were too bright: my eyes were watering. “And I just had to pretend not to care.”

I closed my eyes; somehow I saw the world more clearly this way.

Kaye’s tender grip kept the rocking vessel anchored to the seabed, masked in a serene glow that no amount of rain could tarnish.

But even as the ship’s captain took solace in the eye of the storm the Jolly Roger of a pirate ship just had to make its untimely appearance on the horizon.

“Hey bro,” Alex’s voice sounded from behind. Kaye withdrew her hands as if she was stung. “You cryin’?”

I reopened my eyes. There was only one logical solution to this situation.

I punched Alex in the face.
For the first time in years, I smiled a little inside.

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Act 3

Dream became reality.

The lush morning sun repainted the world seven shades brighter. The very fabric of space seemed to contort under the seductive sunlight. Even the vileness of the prison cell seemed somewhat more bearable. In my mind the songs of angels echoed about the bare walls. I was aching to wake up, to reunite with the long missing piece of my life.

A bolt of energy coursed throughout me, forbidding all but the purest thoughts of devotion. There was another soul that lived within me, and to taint her image was an act of sacrilege.

The cell soon offered no practical purpose. Though since that day I have had no fears of this wretched place, each second I spent here was a second of consciousness I was not spending with her.

As time passed I hated this place more and more. The place that had once taught me so much. And with each passing day I latched onto Kaye more firmly.

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Six years have passed. Still the coffee shop endured. The dim lights, the poor service, the same table with the little scribbles carved into the woodwork.

Alex laid down three steaming cups of coffee on the table. He, Kaye and I were the only ones in the dimly lit coffee shop.

“One latte, one black, and one for my awesome self. Last orders?”

“No, we’re fine.” Kaye smiled politely.

“Yay for me.” Alex sat down alongside us. He worked at the emergency room as a trainee at the local hospital by day and a waiter at our favourite coffee shop by night. I always thought it would be hilarious if someone needing surgery recognized his surgeon as the barista at Starbucks.

That would probably be pretty scary for the patient.

Coffee cups empty we left. Alex’s shift was over, Kaye had curfew, and the Faculty of Law had strict regulations on when students should return to their dorms. As we began to cross the road I let my mind begin to wander once more. There was a
certain charm to the city when one wandered the streets at night. One felt a true
sense of profoundness treading the tree-lined serpentine roads that snaked
throughout the environs of Hong Kong University.

The roar of a speeding lorry tore through the silence of night like a tailor’s scissors
through linen. Something about the noise felt wrong. I wheeled around just in time
to let the white light flood my field of vision.

There was a shot of pain as I was knocked over with great force. There was a flurry of
motion and the bloodcurdling screech of metal grating against metal. Then silence.
My hands were sweaty. My head hurt, but probably less than it should have been if I
had been hit by the vehicle, I must have been pushed out of the way. I brought my
hands up to inspect myself for injuries.

What I felt earlier wasn’t perspiration, it was blood.

I frantically felt around for a wound, painting myself in streaks of crimson, but did not
find the gushing geysers of injuries I had been expecting. Kaye was far away from the
action, thankfully unscathed. This could only mean one thing. I ran to the front of the
lorry.

I threw up.

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The following weeks flew past. Faceless men shoveled dirt onto the coffin
rhythmically.

“Ashes to ashes, dust to dust…”

The sun was shining brightly. A little too brightly for such an occasion.

Kaye laid down a circlet of flowers, taking great care to arrange them neatly.
Dewdrops and tears gave chase to each other amongst the white rose petals.

Neither of us spoke as we walked to our late friend’s home. As if to match the mood
it eventually began to rain. The discomfort caused by the wet formal wear was the
least of our worries.

An old lady answered the door. She took her time adjusting her steel-rimmed
spectacles. Her puffy eyes squinted before widening in a sign of recognition.

A seat on the couch, a cup of tea. The old lady began in a quivering voice

“You must be Kaye. You ... You’re Kaye, aren’t you?”

“Yes ma’am.”
“He left so ... suddenly.”
“He did.”
“You used to be all that my boy ever talked about. I never even got to ask him how your date went two months ago. Please tell me it went well.”

There was a clink of chinaware, but Kaye’s expression remained the same throughout.
I felt silence pulse against my eardrums.

“Yes, we had a great time together.”

In my dreams, I had longed to wake up. Indeed now I have awakened.

Dream had become reality, and reality had become nothingness.

I wasn’t sure what I was feeling; anger, sadness, a strange urge to burst out in laughter, and everything in between. In fact, it is possible that I had ceased to feel from that point in time. I sat very, very still.

The inner demon I had so painstakingly banished six years ago was breaking free of its confines. I could hear the chains snap. I could hear it howling in agony. I could hear it thrashing about, wanting out, turning my cranium into a meat grinder, consuming first myself, then everything else.

Scraping ... against ... the doorway ......

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Act 4

I was in a dark room. Not a single ray of light, not a single hint of warmth.

I sat alone, no reason to live, nor anything to die for. I found myself talking to nobody in particular, and the walls were covered in meaningless scribbles.

This time, my time in the cell did not end. It continued on and on and on and on, after countless day and night cycles. I could be in some sort of coma in real life.

Time went on without me. As the voices in my head grew louder and louder life in the cell became unbearable. I screamed for my release; I pounded on the steel door until my fists were raw, but nobody would hear.

I had a life outside the cell to tend to, yet here I was, stuck in a time-wasting fantasy conjured by my own subconsciousness.

In the end I curled up sobbing in the cot, and silently waited for the voices to die out.

-~.+.~-
Act 5

I open my eyes.

A beam of sunlight keeps me company in this dark room.

Two metres above the ground is a bulletproof window of industrial-grade glass designed to keep me in. But the soft, golden aura could not be kept out.

A unique tranquility fills the atmosphere, the warm, radiant glow of sunlight illuminating every dancing speck of dust in the air.

Over months of intense, brain-racking inner torture, there are snippets of my past that I have recovered; shards of long forgotten memories that eventually came together.

Perhaps this bare prison cell was my reality and my “real life” was the dream. Perhaps the life that had “everything” would not continue.

Perhaps I am right, and I could be wrong, but I must not allow myself to be chained down by what’s passed. We are not born to this earth to chase dreams, or to simply accept the gritty reality force-fed to us. It does not matter which is which. To insist that these entities are mutually exclusive would be a folly. We have our mundane roles as students, clerks or janitors, but conversely we all have dreams beyond anyone else’s wildest imagination.

And we are granted both because they serve very distinct purposes. Dreams make us whole, helping us find our way through the dense fog of politics and intrigue that clouds the world we live in; reality, with its coarse edges and rough handling, polish off the impurities latched onto us, leaving only the strongest parts behind. In short, both play key roles in shaping who we are as individuals.

As repulsive as this chamber is, I have learnt much during my time in it, and I have much, much more to learn.

Perhaps one day, the giant steel door would open, or perhaps one day I will wake up in my university dorm realizing this was all simply another dream. The possibilities made my head spin, but one thing was for certain: Life, be it a real experience, a dream, or a dream within a dream, must go on.

A pair of kind grey eyes checked on me one last time for the day.

Realizing that my thoughts probably made no sense whatsoever, I smiled a little at its owner.

-~:+-~
Epilogue

There was a script-scratching of pencil against paper. Satisfied, the woman slipped the pencil back into the clipboard and slid the vision port shut. She made her way back to her office, undoing her ponytail and letting her hair fall over the collar of her doctor’s coat.

Clipboard on desk she picked up a pen and began completing her report.

*Cape Cameron Asylum*

*Annual Evaluation Report*

*Subject 24601, Room S023*

*Designated psychiatrist: Dr. STRAUSS, Ada*

Kyle Ambrose (Subject 24601) was charged with and ruled guilty of first-degree murder, that of a certain Ms. Kaye Hall. His defense lawyer was quick to cite mental instability as a mitigation factor. Ambrose was declared insane by several psychiatrists, and was subsequently admitted to Cape Cameron for treatment.

Subject exhibited confusion of reality on admission twelve years ago. Subject is reported to constantly insist that he was ‘in a dream’ and made numerous attempts to support his claim through various means, including but not limited to self-mutilation, attacking the orderlies, and attempting suicide. Six months after his arrival subject was placed in solitary confinement for the safety of himself and others.

Ambrose frequently talks during his sleep, an indicator of severe psychological trauma. His behavior has also varied greatly across the years. According to recordings obtained during his sleep, it has been revealed that Kyle Ambrose was reliving the past ten years of his life in minute, vivid detail. This is speculated to be one of the main contributing factors to his reality confusion.

Several months ago he stopped talking in his sleep, but started to show symptoms of depression, advanced anxiety disorder and early stages of schizophrenia. These quickly resided though and subject now displays normal behavioral patterns. Given this patient’s unique situation further observation is required prior to his release, but it would seem that his condition has stabilized.

Rehabilitation recommended.

-~+.THE BEGINNING.+~-
Searching For the City Lights

5E Jason Cheung

When you look at a city, it is like reading the hopes, aspirations and dreams of everyone who has contributed to building it. Throughout different generations, people created different systems and cultures to make a city unique. So have you ever thought about what kind of qualities a ‘great’ city should have? This may be a frivolous question as it seems arduous to define ‘greatness’. But I do have an answer, and to me only cities which have a fair legal system, plenty of cultural activities and the ability to provide good education should be considered truly ‘great’ cities.

First and foremost, a fair legal system is the prerequisite for a city to rank high among other world cities. To put it simply, a fair legal system can help a city uphold justice and fairness, despite its people’s race, religion or wealth. With such a system, people will not be deprived of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Hence, citizens are more likely to live an enjoyable and secure life. To be more specific, a fair legal system can also help combat crime, because people who are guilty will be punished under the law no matter how rich they are. Some may say that in many countries, the consequence faced by a criminal depends on how much one can pay the lawyer, not whether one is guilty or innocent. This might be true, so that’s why for a city to be labeled as great, it must try to maintain a fair and impartial legal system. Such a good city should be a place where criminals will get their deserved punishment, where people cannot be fined or imprisoned until they have undergone a fair trial and been judged guilty, where discrimination against people’s skin colour and beliefs is not allowed.

Justice is sweet and musical; but injustice is harsh and discordant. Taking the United States as an example, in the past, racism against the blacks was a serious problem. White supremacy was encouraged, so was anti-black violence; offensive wordings like “nigger” were used everywhere. But as the legal system was not fair, Negroes were not protected from lynching or other tortures. Hence race riots broke out. Therefore, when a city is full of conflicts and unfairness, it is no longer a good city. Right now, America’s legal system is not yet perfect, but it is as fair as or even more so than other legal systems that exist in the world. The moral arc of the universe bends at the elbow of justice, which means that when a legal system is close to justice, citizens tend to be more civilized and the city shall be closer to greatness.
Besides, good education is also an essential quality that a city should possess. Education is closely related to a city’s economy, society and culture. From a social aspect, education can help children to develop the right values and equip them with the tools to allow a child to grow into a responsible citizen and good human being. With the correct values embedded, these educated citizens will act according to social norms. Thus, fewer conflicts will emerge and the society will definitely be more harmonious and compassionate. Students are expected to soar high in life after leaving school. With knowledge about the world and the capability of interpreting things rightly, they can be well matched for complex jobs and production systems. The increased productivity can contribute to the growth and prosperity of a city. That means people in cities with good education should have a better standard of living. From the cultural perspective, as students acquire knowledge in school, including understandings about their countries’ culture, they should be more appreciative of their immediate world, for instance, the architecture they see or the literature they read, and these things could be better sustained.

Although according to Mark Twain, education is the path from cocky ignorance to miserable uncertainty, a solid education surely gives a city an edge. Finland has many highly acclaimed cities because of its solid education system. Nonetheless, in cities devoid of education, like those in Africa, it is nearly impossible for children to climb up the social ladder, nor to get out of the slums. Therefore, cities which can’t provide good education for their citizens can hardly be livable cities, let alone good ones.

Last but not least, cultural activities are one of the crucial parts of a great city. Culture is the adhesive used by each segment of society to form a collective bond so as to identity with others in the community; it is the spirit of the city. Without culture, the city is dead, and it is just akin to having the same food for every meal throughout one’s entire life. As it gives significance and vibrancy to the city, activities connecting the culture and the citizens must exist. With the presence of cultural activities, unique culture can become timeless. The populace all around the world usually recognizes a city by its symbol; in most cases it is the city’s culture, maybe language, food or a certain kind of lifestyle. So when there are vivid cultural activities in a city, it indicates that the city is indeed a true international city.

Wood rots, stone crumbles and people die; but things as fragile as a thought, a dream and a culture can go on and on. Venice, one of the most extraordinary and
remarkable cities in Europe, has been a great cultural center from time immemorial. In great European cities, their own style of musical composition still exists; there are still new great painters and artists born from cultural activities every year. But the most commendable thing is that local cultural activities like festivals and carnivals can still be experienced. When a city can preserve its culture, it shall be a noticeable city among the whole world.

Not being an empirical constructor, I don’t know what a city should look like; not having seen the whole world, I don’t know how brightly the city lights of great cities shine. But I only know that cities having good education, a fair legal system and cultural activities are most likely illustrious. Of course, it is better if it is a picturesque English seaside city.
Don’t Judge a Book By Its Cover

5E Vivian Siu

Living in a superficial society, it is often true that we judge others by only their appearance without trying to put more time and effort into knowing them. Yet, people always say, “Don’t judge a book by its cover”. Frankly speaking, judging by simply looking at the surface is in fact an act of shallowness. This is not only unfair to the judged, but may also hinder us from getting to know people deeper.

It is impossible for a person to know what the content of a book is about by simply looking at its cover. Books with grand and brilliant covers do not guarantee the words inside illustrate an outstanding and illustrious story. Contrarily, books with plain covers sometimes bring out the wisest words, such as the Bible. The principle of the well-known saying is also suitable in many real-life situations. People with attractive and gorgeous appearances do not necessarily own a kind heart. For instance, the Wicked Queen in the fairytale Snow White is said to be extremely beautiful. However, I believe everyone who has read this story before knows that the Wicked Queen does not possess a generous and decent heart; instead, she is extremely evil and envious. Quasimodo in the French novel “The Hunchback of Notre-Dame” is despised and shunned by the crowd due to his hideous and horrid appearances; however, as the story develops, we learn that he is indeed a person full of warmth and kindness.

Furthermore, different cultures affect the ways we see others. In different societies, there are different cultures, backgrounds and traditions. What we believe is wrong does not necessarily have to be seen as wrong in other cultures. For example, getting a tattoo attached to your body is considered “improper” in Hong Kong. If we come across a man with a tattoo on his arm, we can pretty much assume that he is a gangster. Nevertheless, attaching a tattoo on the human body is in fact a traditional ceremony of many cultures. This provides evidence that what we believe and what we think sometimes fail to reflect the truth and therefore can lead to a lot of misunderstandings among people.

In addition to the above, judging people by their appearances may hinder us from getting to know them more. Stereotypes and first impressions can sometimes impede us from making friends. People without attractive looks can be friendly and decent as well. If Princess Fiona judged Shrek in their first encounter, she would not
have fallen in love with him and would have missed out on a romantic marriage. In other words, judging others too quickly may also mean that a good relationship has already quietly slipped out of your own hands.

We should always bear in mind that we shall not judge a book by its cover. We ought to remind ourselves that appearances cannot represent an object or a person. What is truly important is the inner beauty of a person. Next time, when you meet someone new, try to spend some time to dig deeper into their hearts before judging them.
Dear uncle,

How have you been recently? How is cousin Jane's life in her new school? I wish you both blissful lives. It has been a long time since I last sent you an email, which was about my subject selection. Finally, I've chosen Chemistry, Biology and Economics, which I think are intriguing! And I'm now striving to push my envelope and put into practice the theories I've learnt in the Economics lessons! My friend and I are very interested in renting a stall in the Chinese New Year Market! I sincerely ask for your sponsorship.

When my friend and I were on our way to school last week, our eyes were captivated by a poster outside a community center, which was about the operating stalls at the Chinese New Year Market. We both agreed that this would be a precious opportunity for us to consolidate our economics knowledge through hands-on experience, despite the fact that we need funds to kick start our business.

The total rent is approximately $70,000 and the material cost is about $30,000. My friend and I have only saved $60,000 from our pocket money so we still need $40,000 more to launch our project. My friend Peter said he would ask his family for $20,000 so we still need an extra of $20,000. Knowing that you’re working at InnoCentre promoting Cultural and Creative Industry, especially among youngsters, I’m quite sure that you will support my creative project.

Our plan is to sell Chinese paper cuttings but we intend to combine our Chemistry knowledge with Chinese culture. The paper cuttings will be done on anhydrous cobalt chloride paper, which will make the cutting change colour as humidity changes. According to Economic books, it will be best for us to aim at making a small profit on each piece to prompt a quick turnover. After all, we aim to focus more on the experience rather than the profit. I’m quite sure that we can repay you.

Should our stall sadly lose money, I’ll repay you with my red packets in the following three years. On the contrary, should we earn money; we’ll donate our proceeds to the impoverished provinces in China because we know that there are
children who have never celebrated Chinese New Year because they are in penury. Although our plan is well-devised, there may still be risks and difficulties we have never anticipated. Even so, the experience will be a milestone in my life because it is the first time I bear the responsibility to run a genuine business. I sincerely hope that you will sponsor us and I long for your favourable reply!

I wish you all the best.

Love,

Chris
Tutorial Schools – A Necessary Evil?

5F Charles Leung

“Super-tutor”, “Brand-A tutor”, “Godfather of Science”... these names often appear in two-story high advertisements. Does the image sound familiar to you? Those are the eye-catching promotions we see every day. This phenomenon and figures indicate the potential growth of tutorial schools in the foreseeable future. There has been a heated discussion on whether it is necessary for students to attend these schools. Before giving an opinion, we have to ask, why do they go to tutorial schools?

A significant reason is that the exam-oriented materials of tutorial schools are relatively practical. The good result in the DSE is a ticket to a bright future. Some students may care much about the results, instead of the process of learning. The materials of tutorial schools focus on exam strategies and they are presumably more systematic, comprehensive and better elaborated than textbooks. They may achieve a more desirable outcome in the DSE, opening the gate to a brighter future and career.

Another reason conducive to the trend is peer pressure and the widespread propaganda of tutorial schools. Teenagers can easily yield to peer pressure. Following others to attend tutorial schools may give them a sense of security. Tutorial schools usually use past results to appeal to students. These advertisements can be found everywhere around the city. Peer pressure, coupled with the plethora of propaganda, alters the mind of students and makes them think that it is necessary to attend tutorial schools in order to get a good result and feel at ease.

We now know the reasons contributing to the growth of tutorial schools, but you may doubt if it is crucial to attend tutorial schools. In my opinion, it is unnecessary to attend those schools, and the situation has to be rectified.

Hong Kong students are already leading a laborious life. Living in a city with excessive pressure, students have to follow strict routines without proper relaxation. Every student reading this has to spend almost eight hours studying at school. The learning ability and pace will undoubtedly decline after such a long time at school. The effectiveness of tutorial classes is questionable. Moreover, different from one-on-one lessons, tutorial schools have fixed schedules which students cannot change according to their own preferences. The tutorial school classes can occupy a lot of their precious time, making them quit other gainful extra-curricular activities. These activities are beneficial to their mental health and can help relieve their burden. In countless cases students have to choose between tutorial classes and
their interests. If they choose the additional lessons, their lives may become even more laborious without much increase in their academic results.

From another perspective, tutorial schools are accountable for creating extra pressure on the students. The supplementary exercises from the tutorial schools, coupled with the compulsory workload from schools, doubles the students’ burden. In the worst case, they may lose their interest in the subjects. Their academic results can be adversely affected. Students may spend a lot of effort and time only to lose more than they gain. Imagine that you love cakes initially. However, when you are forced to eat cakes every meal, you will eventually lose your appetite for cakes. Doing excessive exercises for the DSE is similar. Students may develop negative thoughts due to the intolerable pressure.

Many critics or parents claim that it is necessary for students to attend tutorial schools to improve their results. The exam-oriented materials are the key to success in the DSE. Besides, advocates claim tutors can provide crucial guidance for the students. However, I surmise that their values should be rectified. They are probably influenced by the advertisements conveying the message that attending tutorial schools is the only way to get desirable and satisfying grades. Indeed, teachers and schools are not beyond reach for students. The educators are always willing to provide suitable help. If students rely tremendously on tutors, they may not concentrate and pay attention during regular lessons. This is obviously a drawback. Furthermore, the effect of tuition is not yet proved. It is hard to say whether it is the students’ potential or the tutorial classes contribution that mostly influences the results. Tutorial schools may be like a placebo. Students attend them just because they want to get as much as their counterparts do. The psychological effect is a veil covering the truth.

It is crystal clear that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Hence, I would say it is not necessary to attend tutorial schools in spite of the infamous public exam we are all facing. The whole education system is the culprit that should be changed one day, sooner or later. Although it is unnecessary, joining the extra classes is understandable, as no one would like to be turned away from the gate to a better future. You should plan your time wisely and find the most beneficial way to study. Finally, one should not to be fooled by the “super-tutors”, “Brand-A tutors” or “the Godfather of Science”.

Oasis Think Big
I was on the MTR playing a game on my mobile phone when a huge man started quarreling with a tiny old lady standing in front of me.

“Are you kidding me? Only 3 million? That’s not what you promised!” The man wearing a black jacket was shouting to the old lady. He looked really furious, as if he was about to devour the lady.

The old lady, with folded arms, watched the man with contempt. She was wearing a crimson coat and carrying a champagne handbag. Her red lipstick was very eye-catching making her look youthful, even though old age had bleached her hair.

She did not make a sound and just walked on. The man strode forward rapidly and blocked her road. Suddenly, the old lady raised her head and confronted the huge man, “I had already given you 3 million. Why are you so greedy?”

Being in the same compartment, I stood still. I had to say I cared more about my new application on my mobile phone than their conflict. Hence, I buried myself in my game as if there was nobody around me.

“What!” a deafening howl as loud as thunder pulled me away from my game. All the people in the compartment turned their heads to the huge man. A blush dyed his cheeks. Seconds later, every one turned their heads back as if nothing had happened. Having taken a deep breath, the man approached the old lady. Nervousness, determination and fierceness flashed in his eyes. His next action took my breath away.

He drew a gun from his jacket and pointed it to the old lady’s stomach. I guessed he was ready to take a leap of faith.

At that moment, the door opened and a crowd swarmed onto the train. The man and the old lady were pushed around in the crowd and they stood in front of me eventually.

“Life or money?” the man whispered. “Put your gun down, you might hurt the
innocent,” the old lady replied in a low voice emotionlessly.

I was frozen with fear and a sense of chill went down my spine. I dared not move an inch and I could not take my eyes off the gun. I clenched my fists tightly and the only thought coming to my mind was to flee the dangerous scene. As the seconds ticked by, cold sweat was oozing from my pores.

Thank god that the door opened again for I could not wait to get out of the train. Abruptly, a young man tried to snatch the gun but to no avail as the huge man was holding the gun with all his might. Although people around did not know what was happening, they ran out of the door to avoid being embroiled in the conflict. The old lady followed the crowd and glanced backward. Soon, the compartment was empty.

My heart thumped audibly and I was out of puff. I stopped running. No sooner had I looked back than the huge man bolted out of the door and jostled his way through the crowd without his gun. He seemed to be looking for somebody, preciously, the old lady. He was running as fast as a leopard hunting for his prey.

“Bang!”

The atmosphere was tense and everyone was on edge. Simultaneously, a huge body fell on the ground.

The young man, who was snatching at the gun minutes before, rushed to the corpse of the huge man and showed his police badge. He turned him over and called his colleagues.

“Gosh! He’s dead. I’m sure she did it and she’s gone. Okay, good luck.” Then the young man put down his phone and sighed disappointedly.

Everything happened just like a short, impressive nightmare. I heaved a sigh of relief and felt glad that no other commuters were hurt.

About 20 meters away, I noticed a woman who was wearing a crimson coat and carrying a champagne handbag. Her red lipstick was very eye-catching, matching her long, straight, black hair.
Report About the Resignation of Mr. Jesse Brown

5F Wing Luo

1. Introduction
In order to boost our company’s competitiveness, we had recently hired Mr. Jesse Brown, who had deep international insights. However, Mr. Brown resigned after three months’ time. Missteps could have been avoided.

2. Job performance of Mr. Brown
Mr. Brown’s performance was undesirable and he failed to meet the company’s expectations. To commence with, many of his counterparts found him totally inefficient. Some stated that he always retreated to the resting room during working hours. It was also noted that he was leaving the company at 5 pm, which was 2 hours earlier than the end of his shift. These situations had greatly affected our company’s efficacy on security maintenance, which was the main service we provide to our clients.
In addition, despite Mr. Brown’s adequate international exposure, he failed to speak fluent Cantonese. Thus, he failed to communicate with our clients effectively. Consequently, our rivals were spreading rumors that our company lacked the ability to provide reliable services. This had tremendously affected our reputation.

3. Parts that should be improved and the reasons behind the mistakes
3.1. Lacking awareness of cultural differences
Our company overlooked the drawbacks of hiring foreigners. One of which was the cultural differences we are facing. Foreigners tended to spend less time working. Therefore, Mr. Brown might have mentally suffered due to the long working hours. The reason behind this flaw was that our company was short of effectively understanding foreign customs, thus we failed to coordinate with him efficiently.

3.2. Talent not in the appropriate place
Mr. Brown’s strength was in international affairs and he was weak in using Cantonese to communicate. However, he was put in the position which demanded him to use Cantonese. Therefore, he failed to dedicate himself to the company with his talents. He resigned out of immense pressure.
This poor utilization of human resources was caused by the company’s failure to identify employees’ strengths and ineffective cross-cultural management practices.
4. Improvements

4.1. Vocational training
The company may provide vocational training to employees as well as the employers. It is crucial for the training to include cross-cultural relations as to deepen both employer’s and employee’s insights. We can thus have a more comprehensive plan when recruiting foreigners.

4.2. Thorough interviews
During interviews with potential employees, the interviewers should explore the interviewees’ talents. They should also seek employees who have the same ambitions as our company’s and arrange them positions which fit their merits.

5. Conclusion
It is hoped that similar incidents can be prevented in the foreseeable future, and that our company has a bright vista.
Dear Jacky,

How are you? Having a nice day? Are you still indulging yourself in Japanese comics and animation? As your friend, I am truly worried about you! I think you should spend less time and money on your newly acquired ‘hobby’. Have you ever considered that getting addicted to comics may bring unimaginable harm to you?

I am well aware of the fact that Japanese comics and animation are one of the most popular sources of entertainment for teens in Asia. Many local teenagers, just like you, also devote a lot of time and money to their trendy passion, but I think they are not putting their money and time to good use, so aren’t you!

Firstly, our society is getting more and more competitive. Therefore, we should equip ourselves as early as possible to deal with the challenges of the future. Lying on the bed, savoring loads of comics should be the last on our list. I won’t deny that Japanese anime and manga are strong temptations, as they are so readily available on the Internet and at magazine booths, but we should learn to resist them determinedly. Maybe you can channel your effort into other meaningful activities such as doing volunteer work, joining a sports team or taking part in cultural events. Through joining various extra-curricular activities, you can explore and develop your potential in various aspects.

What’s more, you should focus on your studies. Being a student in such an exam-oriented education system, you should put more effort into exam preparation. When you are spoiling yourself with Japanese comics and animation, your peers may have already outperformed you in exams.

Apart from that, you may have neglected your relationship with your parents. I heard that your parents are worried about your health as they find you reading comics and watching cartoons day and night. If you keep straining your eyes all day long, you may suffer from various eye conditions, not to mention short-sightedness and long-sightedness. Pursuing an interest is a good thing, but pursuing one at the
expense of your health is another.

Also, you should not spend most of your pocket money on comic books and their related merchandise such as figurines, posters and cosplay items. You are not putting your money to good use. Do you know how heartbroken your parents will be if they know that you have wasted their hard-earned money on comics and cartoons. You should cherish what you have and spend your money meaningfully, such as donating it to charity and helping the needy.

I am really concerned about you. During your free time, you can attend tutorial classes to consolidate the knowledge you acquire at school or enrich your life experience by taking part in various community work in order to equip yourself with the necessary social skills for the future as you may encounter various difficulties when you embark on your first job upon graduation! To a certain extent, I understand that reading comics may help you relieve your pressure, but getting addicted to it is a totally different story.

It is high time you stopped devoting most of your free time to reading comics and watching cartoons and spending too much money buying the related merchandise. Let’s regain our control over life and say no to a harmful hobby. I have to go now. Write back soon.

Best wishes,
Chris
Chris
A Creative Proposal: Donut Story – A Self-Service Bakery

6A Yannie Pang

Background Information

In this day and age, fast food has become a mainstream of eating culture. However, it is not only unhealthy, but also shortening the time everyone spends with his or her friends and families. Due to this phenomenon, a self-service bakery has been introduced to teenagers in a bid to enable them to display their creativity in making their own desserts and delicacies, and enjoying the time with friends as well. The bakery is named ‘Donut Story’, which represents the sweet time of making a meal together.

How It Works for Teenagers

It is more and more commonplace to see self-service shops and they are indeed getting popular among teens. They love to try out new ideas with their friends. The bakery, which provides all basic ingredients as well as tools they need, is an ideal place for adolescents to spend their time on baking cakes and bread other than the other usual forms of entertainment they have at the weekend. It will be an enjoyable experience, as they do not need to do a lot of cleaning jobs like cooking or baking at home. The bakery provides the dishes-cleaning service, which perfectly fits teens nowadays who do not want to clean up the mess by themselves.

Potential Obstacles

There will be two main obstacles in this business idea. Firstly, finding an ideal location for the shop will be challenging. The space for a kitchen and the dining tables should not be too small. Therefore, 500m² will be a minimum requirement. However, the rent in Hong Kong is relatively high, especially in the popular districts. It will be hard to find a suitable location that is both easy to access and is within the limited budget. Secondly, promoting the business may not be as effective as expected. With the limited budget, only inexpensive promoting methods are considered, namely, using the social networking sites and setting up a web page. However, these methods may not really reach our target audience, so the
effectiveness is in doubt.

**Required Equipment**

A basic kitchen set up, including ovens, microwave ovens, pans, a sink, a table, and tools for baking should be ready for the consumers. On the other hand, ingredients such as flour, eggs, milk, butter, and the like should be all freshly delivered every day for baking. For safety reasons, emergency equipment such as a smoke alarm system, fire extinguishers and oxygen masks should always be available in the shop. Also, at least one receptionist will stay at the shop to answer consumers’ question and lend a helping hand to them whenever necessary.
If I Could Read Your Mind

6A Yannie Pang

When we were young, we always hoped to stand out and be eminent. Watching cartoons of Superman, we would submerse ourselves into those characters, imaging one day when we got the same kind of magical power too.

It should be another normal school day, as deadly dull as I thought it should be. However, when I opened my eyes, thousands of tiny voices were sent into my ears. ‘Arh—’ however hard I tried to cover my ears, there was no sign that the voices would stop. I just couldn’t do anything but cry out loud. My mum walked inside with heavy steps. I heard her voice in my mind. ‘How come Christopher has not yet woken up at this late hour!’ She just opened the door with a bang, and pulled off my blankets. ‘WAKE UP! You see what time it is now? A quarter past seven!’

I suddenly realized something at this moment – I could read others’ mind! I couldn’t believe that my teenage dream had come true! I just felt like I was on the top of the world. I packed my bag hastily and rushed to school.

I sat in the classroom like a cat on a hot tin roof. At the moment I noticed that I had got this unexpected ability, all I wanted to do was just one thing, and that was the perfect moment. Hoily came in with her own graceful pace, and sat down in front of me. Her smile shone like roses under the sunlight. My heart skipped a beat, although this scene took place at the same time every day. I moved a bit forward, and then paid heed to the strongest voice, which was the voice within my dream girl. ‘Hungry. Want to have a piece of cheese cake.’ Oh I got it. That was what I should do. Then the next hindrance popped up: how could I get the cake as soon as possible? I tried so hard to focus on my class teacher, and she was humming a delightful song in her head. Maybe that was the perfect time for me to go out for the cake, I thought, although my class teacher’s singing was off-key, lamentably.

I could taste the sweet smell of success after buying the cheesecake under the teacher’s skeptical eyes. This might be the most absurd thing I had ever done during my high school life, skipping class merely for buying a slice of cake for a girl. However, I wouldn’t regret my impulsive act anyway. Hoily deserved it.
It felt as though a thousand years had passed when the break finally arrived. I pretended to be casual, so casual that you could feel how deliberate I was, and asked if Hoily wanted to share the cheese cake with me. She was totally flabbergasted and gave me a ‘yes’ with hesitation. I really portrayed how complacent I was, thanks to her bright smile. This was the very first time she gave me a smile!

Then everything went so smoothly, like skating on the ice so freely. Not only could I answer every question before the teacher announced it, but won all card games by scanning each participant’s mind. It was no exaggeration to say that that was the most wonderful day in my life. Thank God for giving me such an amazing ability.

I sang out Hoily's number during my bath, which was given by her. However, to my astonishment, I started to feel a pain in my head, which resembled a group of kids knocking at the deepest level of my brain. I tried to scream for help, but my mouth kept closed. The thoughts of everybody, from all over the world, came into my mind within a second. I knew I couldn’t take it anymore. That was really an enormous torment. I felt like I was going to explode, or burn. I couldn't control myself anymore, and finally fainted.

I woke up in my mum’s warm arms the next day. All those annoying voices had just vanished, and what I felt was a relief, no other kind of sensation. When I looked at my mum, no matter how hard I concentrated, I couldn’t hear her own thoughts anymore. Being a superman was too tiring for me. Being ordinary was far better.

Everything, including my magical power I had thirsted for since I was a kid, was only a dream to me. Hoily did not talk to me since that time, but still, I wouldn't forget the gorgeous rose on her face. I owned it once, and would treasure this memory for the rest of my life.
Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a resident of Flat A, 13th Floor. I am writing to complain about the disturbance from my neighbor, the resident of 13B. The nighttime electric guitar music has tortured me for two weeks. It is hoped that the Management Office could take action to mediate the dispute.

Mr. Chan, my new neighbor who lives in Flat B, is a band member, according to the residential guard. When he played his electric guitar at 11 p.m. on the first night he moved in, I believed it was understandable as it might be for business sake. I even quite appreciated his zeal and passion for pop music and his job.

Nevertheless, one week passed and rarely did a night go by without his deafeningly loud electric guitar noise. Thanks to the noise, I could not sleep well and it was putting my health at risk. Because of sleep deprivation, I have had a headache all the time and go to work with a worn-out body. Not only my mental health, but also my skin complexion has become worse due to the lack of rest. Therefore, I believe the disturbance caused by Mr. Chan was the culprit for my affected work performance. The insomnia has continued for the whole week, and I have no vigor for my work these days.

Being bedeviled by the problem, I knocked on Mr. Chan’s door last week in order to tackle the situation. With a gentle and polite attitude, I told him that the noise was troubling me and I hoped that he could put himself in others’ shoes. I had breathed a sigh of relief at the moment he promised not to play the electric guitar after 10 p.m. However, I then found out that he had banished my words from his thought quickly and was obviously brushing me off. The situation has not improved and I am still beset with it.

For the sake of keeping a comfortable living environment for the residents, the problem needs a formal caution. Willing to keep the dispute simple, I hope that the Management Office can intervene and reflect the situation to Mr. Chan before any legal action is taken. Please admonish him not to play the guitar at night, or else he may have to consider installing acoustic tiles in his flat to soundproof it to prevent bothering his neighbors. I believe that the department is efficient and equitable and it is sincerely hoped that the problem can be solved as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dear Editor,

As busking is a growing scene in the local territory, especially in the busy shopping districts, I am going to explain why this is so and the advantages and the disadvantages that busking may bring to our city and citizens.

When I look in retrospect, busking was not that popular in many cities or even Hong Kong in the older days. Recently, however, in Mong Kok, Hong Kong or even Dan Shui, Taipei, it is easy to find buskers busking on the streets, some of them are juggling, some are singing and some are acting. Then, why is busking growing and becoming so popular?

To commence with, Hong Kong is an international tourist spot. Every day, there are a lot of tourists from different countries and cities. Worldwide visitors stay in Hong Kong. Our streets are full of local and foreign visitors, especially the shopping districts of Mong Kok and Causeway Bay. As we can see, there are a lot of potential audience and spectators. As time passes, Hong Kong has become a stage for buskers to busk on the streets by singing or acting.

In addition, it is easy to set up in these pedestrians-only streets in Hong Kong. There is electricity supply network available from shops or buildings. The buskers only have to bring along their amplifiers, microphones and the related instruments. The stage is easily set up in these streets. Take a look at Sai Yeung Choi Street and you can see bands setting up their stages quickly every day. Besides, these stages are mobile. As there are a lot of platforms provided by the government, buskers can change their locations along the designated streets wherever space is available. For example, Monday: Mong Kok, Tuesday: Tsim Sha Tsui, Wednesday: Causeway Bay and Thursday: Central. So, busking has become well-liked by the public.

Moreover, people prefer new and creative entertainment. As the economy in Hong Kong has expanded over the last few decades, citizens nowadays enjoy a more luxurious life. During the weekend holiday, they are not satisfied with just staying at
home watching television or sleeping for a whole day. Instead, they prefer outdoor activities. Some new and creative forms of entertainment are coming up, and busking is a real life example. Every evening, we can see buskers gather in streets, some of them are daytime workers who are teenagers or the elderly. Life is so short that people are not satisfied with only working or studying, so they want to enjoy life and live life to the full by doing interesting things. In view of this, citizens choose to try new activities, such as busking as a means to enjoy their life.

Furthermore, busking is advantageous to our city and citizens. To our city, busking can further enhance the international image of Hong Kong. Years ago, Hong Kong was known to the world for its thriving economy. Nowadays, busking displays rich cultures from talented artists from both local and foreign countries. Hence, Hong Kong has become more multicultural. Hong Kong is not only known by its international economy but also by its international culture.

To our citizens, busking provides a platform for cultural exchange. Busking connects different cultures, such as music and art. Not only are there local buskers, but also buskers from all over the world. Cultural exchange occurs through busking. Buskers can share their own special culture with others. Citizens can easily get in touch with other countries’ culture in real life. In the course of time, the culture of Hong Kong becomes more diversified.

On the other hand, there are disadvantages to our city and citizens too. To our city, the environment is polluted. Buskers usually perform in the evening, and thanks to their microphones and amplifiers, the noise reaches a high level. Therefore, it exacerbates the sound pollution in these busy districts. Moreover, more passers-by and spectators will produce more rubbish. Audiences may like to enjoy the show with snacks or drinks. Consequently, more plastic bags and containers will be thrown away which in turn means more rubbish will be sent to the landfills. It will speed up the saturation of the landfills of Hong Kong.

To our citizens, the buskers may block the way. As buskers usually perform on pedestrians-only streets, they almost always occupy half of the road area. Citizens may find it hard to walk along the streets. This may bring inconvenience to other passers-by who do not want to watch or enjoy the busking. Indirectly, the nearby shopkeepers cannot be well visited by potential customers along these streets.
Busking is being more welcomed; I think busking should be promoted. As the Hong Kong government is willing to promote creative industries, more platforms should be provided. For example, the West Kowloon Culture Districts can be a more spacious and convenient stage for buskers to perform and for drawing buskers from all over the globe. This policy may not only be welcomed by the buskers and citizens, it may also stimulate the economy of the West Kowloon district too. In the long run, promoting busking is good for Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Wong
Hoping that the Noise Will Cease

6B Emily Ho

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to voice my discontent over the continuing noise problem that is created by the resident in the property that your department manages.

I am the resident in Flat A, Floor 1. I found that the neighbor who lives next to me plays his electric guitar every night for the past two weeks. The noise that he produces is agonizing our family. As we are used to sleeping early at night, the unbearable noise keeps us from falling asleep, and eventually leads us to sleep deprivation. Our daily life is therefore being affected. I have tried to reflect our situation to the relevant resident, however, he showed complete disregard for our lodged complaints and the deplorable situation did not get ameliorated. According to the relevant noise control ordinance in Hong Kong, people are forbidden to operate any electronic sound device or music instrument between 10:00p.m and 8:00 a.m. As a result, this resident has violated the law and was depriving others of enjoying their lives. Therefore, it is necessary for your department to take a moment to consider this problem and ultimately rectify the situation.

Being one of the victims, I request that your department take action immediately. The suggestions can be boiled down into two aspects. Firstly, I advise you to send a warning letter to the resident on the noise matter, requesting him to comply with the law and stop creating nuisance to others. If the situation worsens further, you should move to the next steps, such as enforcing a penalty. Secondly, your department should also increase the frequency of patrols in the building, lest any nuisance might happen. You should ensure that all the residents can enjoy their cozy living environment under your management.

I expect your department to reply to me with a detailed arrangement on how to alleviate the current noise problem within ten days. I sincerely hope that the noise will cease as soon as possible. Thank you for your help.

Yours faithfully,
Emily Ho
Dear Sir,

I am writing to apply for the position of an urban planner as posted in the Orange Newspaper on 9th May. I sincerely offer myself as a candidate for the above post.

If you would kindly offer me the job, it would be very appreciative, as I have got much passion for the post. To be frank, I have been dreaming to be an urban planner since I was young. I think that being an urban planner is honourable as s/he works for the sake of the citizens. Through careful and well-thought out urban planning, an urban planner can enrich the quality of life of the people in a sense that land use conflicts can be minimized as much as possible. For instance, before developing a community, urban planners should opt a location that is far away from any industrial estates so that the air quality and noise pollution can be maintained and controlled at an acceptable level. From the above case, it is unequivocal that a qualified urban planner makes contributions to the local area as it guarantees a relatively high degree of quality of life. Moreover, my father used to be an urban planner who had been working diligently for the city. Therefore, I really want to be an urban planner to enables me to continue his mission. Had it not been for my father, I would not have dreamed to be engaged in this industry.

It is easy to understand that if I was only a dreamer without fundamental skills, I would not be capable of pursuing my dream. Thus, I have been equipping myself with the necessary skills through my studies at both secondary school and university. During my six years of secondary school education, I acquired a comprehensive understanding of Geography, Economics and History, which I can apply to my job. For example, by studying History I have developed an acute awareness of different cultures and have a better understanding of relationships among various ethnic minorities. Hence, I can achieve ethnical and social harmony with the help of appropriate planning of minorities’ living places. Similarly, Economics has furthered my comprehension about the concept of comparative advantage, which is of utmost importance in deciding what kind of urban planning best suits the development of the economy. In addition to that, my studies at university have made me a well-grounded urban planner. The course on urban studies has deepened my
understanding on the meaning, methods and impacts of urban planning. In other words, my university studies have prepared me thoroughly for the demands my job will have and how I can deal with baffling problems. Thereupon, I strongly believe that I can bring relevant skills to my future role as I have already accumulated abundant experience.

Talking about the actual work experience, I am confident that other than theoretical knowledge, my practical experiences have also made me a suitable candidate for the post. First, I have completed a Geography project on the planning of a rural area in Hong Kong. From the project, I first realized that being an urban planner is not as idealistic as I thought it was. Truth be told, it requires both problem-solving skills and communication strategies in order to smooth the process of a project. More importantly, I joined a programme while I was studying at university. The programme was a professional simulation project about specific district planning. In this programme, I learned to bear great responsibility as I was in charge of everything. From these experiences, not only do they broaden my horizon and let me know what the real world is like, but I have also learnt to be a better person who is able to work with others cooperatively. I am convinced that these effectual experiences would make me a suitable candidate for the post.

In possession of my passion, academic background and work experience, I am sure about my suitability for this post. I hope that you will give me an opportunity to explain myself further at an interview.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Wong
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I’m Chris Wong, a student member of Hong Kong Unison. Hong Kong Unison is a non-government organization, which focuses on serving ethnic minority Hong Kong residents and their families. Today, I’m standing here, speaking for the ethnic minority students.

First and foremost, let me ask you a simple question. What do you think about the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong? Have you ever considered them as part of Hong Kong? I’m sure your answer is ‘No’. Abdullah, a six-year-old Pakistani kindergarten graduate, passed all his exams with flying colours. Not only did he score 85 out of 100 in Chinese, he also got straight As in English, Mathematics and English oral. But he was poorly graded in the entrance test of his preferred primary school, St. Margaret’s. Abdullah claimed that the teachers didn’t ask him any question in Chinese at the entrance test, but they awarded zero marks to him. His parents asked the Education Bureau for an explanation about their son’s rejection by St. Margaret’s, but the Education Bureau didn’t give them any response. Just because Abdullah is South Asian, just because he is an ethnic minority, just because of his skin colour, he is deprived of his right to enroll in a school that he deserves. In addition, many ethnic minority students find it hard to enroll in the local mainstream schools because their Chinese level is lower than their Chinese peers’. In the short run, they can’t gain access to a high-banding secondary school and a local university. In the long run, they can hardly find a job upon graduation. They may end up unemployed, failing to lift their family out of poverty.

It’s unfair! You didn’t take any action to forbid the mainstream schools from treating the minority students unfairly, so much so that you let them loose on the issue. When the ethnic minority asked the Education Bureau and the Equal Commission for help, you turned a blind eye to them. It’s unfair. That’s exactly what you are doing now.

In addition to this, all designated schools are supposed to have a critical mass of minority students to be selected and have a long-term commitment to take care of the ethnic minority. It is a sad truth that many of these obligations are not fulfilled. Delia-Man Kiu English Primary School has 450 ethnic minority students, making up of almost 90% of the student body. It is doing quite well in helping the ethnic minority
students, too. For instance, the principal has split the students into three levels in Chinese lesson. Having the Chinese curriculum adapted, the students’ written and spoken Chinese can be improved progressively. Unfortunately, Delia-Man Kiu English Primary School was rejected when it applied to be a designated school, whereas Pak Kau College, which has 76 minority students only, is indeed a designated school. Without the additional financial assistance and professional advice reserved for a designated school, the schools which dedicate themselves to the needs of minority students cannot help them effectively. In the end, these ethnic minority students are victims.

Neglect! You attach no importance to the daily operation of the designated schools. You don’t monitor if the designated schools are really committed to taking care of minority students. You don’t care if they aren’t fulfilling their obligations. You don’t pay attention to the minority students’ needs. You are destroying their future. Neglect! That’s what you are doing now.

Concern, needless to say, is the prerequisite for tackling the problem of racial discrimination in the education system. If you can campaign against racial discrimination through the mass media and through educating the general public, the Education Bureau and mainstream schools will stop ill-treating them gradually. If you can clearly stipulate the selection criteria of a designated school, like stating the exact percentage of minority students the school should have, the respective schools will make appropriate changes to their current practices. It is no exaggeration to say that if you can do all the things I said, you can end racial discrimination in the education system.

Ethnic minority children are not only their parents’ future, but also Hong Kong’s future! Action speaks louder than words. Tolerance is your official message in inclusive education, so please take action to end racial discrimination in the education system immediately. Thank you.
Evil Messages from TV Demons

6B Katy Law

Thanks to its copious information and diverse programme choices, television has played a pivotal role in socialization during the 21st century. While it has become the dominant form of home entertainment, some are arguing that “much of popular television promotes negative values”. It cannot be denied that television instills some detrimental massages to the viewers. The observations for such a statement can be boiled down into various aspects.

To commence with, television propagates overwhelmingly violent ideas. Television has always been blamed for advocating violence. Television violence is about murder, bloodshed and butchery, to name just a few. In America, many television shows, for one, Dexter, are infamous for their violent content. Characters in these programmes often demonstrate hitting, stabbing or even murdering. On the other hand, according to a research, the level of violence during Saturday morning cartoons is higher than the level of violence during the prime time in the U.S. There are about six to eight violent acts per hour during the prime time, versus twenty to thirty violent acts per hour on Saturday morning cartoons. These TV shows always instill the wrong message that every problem can be settled by violence. This unhealthy idea harms the viewers’ mindset over the course of time. Due to the impressionable age they are at, children are always most vulnerable to television violence.

It goes without saying that television viewers are being deluged with foul language as swear words become commonplace nowadays. Bad language is so common in modern television that many viewers consider it as normal in everyday conversation. The actors in the TV dramas use foul language to express their feelings and emotions. Those characters who speak bad language all the time usually represent the attractive and fashionable roles in the drama. This phenomenon often appears in teen dramas. In Hong Kong, it is not difficult to find a TV programme that contains vulgar language. For instance, LegCo Review, an informative programme produced by Radio Television Hong Kong, was criticized by its audience because of its vulgar content in previous years. Thus, it can be seen that much of popular television promotes crude content such as foul language.
Apart from the aforementioned negative values, a great quantity of television programmes is accused of getting raunchier. One survey found that seventy-five percent of Americans felt that television had too much sexually explicit material, while eighty-six percent believed that television had contributed to a decline in moral values. It is undeniable that sexual promiscuity in the television appears to be at an all-time high. Much of popular TV programmes contain explicit love scenes nowadays, especially those foreign TV shows. Some television even reveals plots that celebrate premarital sex, extramarital affair, or homosexuality. For instance, Gossip Girl, the American teen drama, has sex scenes in almost every episode. It is even more ridiculous that sex is used as a cynical ploy for personal gain instead of pleasure in a number of dramas in this day and age. A study of adolescents showed that watching sex on TV influences teens to have sex. Youths would be more likely to initiate premarital sex as well as other sexual activities after watching these pernicious television shows.

Provided with the observations outlined above, we may certainly conclude that much of popular television promotes negative values, namely, violence, foul language and pornography. It is believed that the government should regulate those immoral television programmes and the television producers should exercise self-discipline in designing a programme. Otherwise, the mindset of our next generation would very likely be contaminated more seriously.
The newest generation has recently been described as a narcissist and lazy generation by Time magazine. It is common to see that the newest generation has an inflated sense of self and overestimate their abilities. While a few others have high regards for their appearance or personality, a few are indolent nowadays. They yearn to look and act like celebrities, or even crave to be the center of attention. Is this description impartial to them? My answer is a resounding yes. There are plenty of reasons for this indisposed phenomenon.

First and foremost, the excessively pampering parents could be the main cause. Nowadays, many households have only one child, the parents, therefore, always give the greatest provision and their whole love to their only child and prepare everything for them. In a bid to enhance children’s own self-esteem, parents highly commend their children whenever they do something right. On the contrary, when their lovely children make any mistakes, these parents usually only exhort them or soothe them. Parents may also create an attitude in the child that he/she is better than others and is entitled to special privileges. In the course of time, children may need to be the center of attention. They set unrealistic goals for themselves, without making any effort. Hence, children are constantly pampered, coddled, or overly praised, and this may develop a narcissist and lazy personality later in childhood or early adulthood.

It goes without saying that the malleable social media, which allows users to craft their ideal selves, is also a significant culprit. For instance, young people always fool themselves into thinking that they have hundreds or thousands of “friends” on Facebook. They can delete unflattering comments or block anyone who disagrees with them. They can choose to show the world only flattering and amusing photographs of themselves in order to earn thousands of “likes”. Using Twitter, young people can pretend they are worth “following,” as though they had real-life adherents. These eventually create arrogant narcissists who lack gratitude and humility.

Apart from the unreal Internet world, the abundantly materialistic society in this day and age is also the reason conducive to a narcissist and lazy generation. In the
21st Century, the economic environment of many countries has improved significantly. Thus, unlike the past, children now live in an affluent city. They can have what they want and ask for money just like asking for candies. There are even maids in many families. Children can command them to finish all housework and to do everything for them. Ultimately, the newest generation believes that they own the world and need not do things by themselves. This narcissistic and lazy lifestyle contributes too many “little queens” and “little kings” in the newest generation.

Provided with the factors outlined above, we may conclude that the newest generation is undoubtedly a narcissist and lazy generation. It is believed that the “Queens” and the “Kings” should not only change their mindset but also their insolent and lax morals. Otherwise, it will be difficult to hold out much hope for the future.
1. Background information

My idea of photo taking and printing involves providing rooms for customers. Inside of each room, there will be a professional camera. The camera needs to be controlled by the customers, including the camera settings. They can have fun with their friends and take as many photos as they want in one hour. We also provide them with props, costumes and decorations that can make their photos more interesting and unique. There is no CCTV in the room. Customers can take photos with friends without any disturbance. At last, the customers can choose any photo they are content with and get it printed immediately.

2. Fees for the photo taking and printing

No matter how many people enter the room, the customers only need to pay HK$300 per hour including the photo printing fees. The rooms are of three sizes and the fees depend on the size of the room, which range from HK$200 to HK$400. In addition, the props, costumes and decorations are all free of charge, so the customers can enjoy utilizing them.

3. How the idea is targeted at teenagers

My business idea is mainly to attract teenagers since teenagers like to take photos with friends. It is not uncommon to see teenagers uploading their photos on social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Such popularity shows that teenagers like to take photos and enjoy the process. Indeed, my business provides a private place for them to enjoy taking photos with their friends using a high quality camera. On the other hand, the room is completely private so that teenagers can take some crazy photos with their friends like making ugly faces without being concerned about strangers watching them. Therefore, it will be quite attractive to teens.
4. Potential obstacles

In order to lower the cost, I need to find some places where the rent is low but are at the same time near the urban areas that provides customers with both good accessibility and convenience. Also, we need to have enough money to start the business and to prepare for the fact that the start of the business may be difficult, as not many customers may know about the business. We also need to advertise more to increase our popularity. Plus, manpower should be managed well so as not to waste valuable resources. The above issues are the potential obstacles for my business idea.
In this day and age, the people who were born between 1980 and 2000 have been stereotyped as the newest generation or "Generation Y". Their behaviors have become the talk of the town, as according to the latest TIME magazine, "narcissist" and "lazy" are the adjectives that are used to describe them. I agree with this description and the reasons for such a phenomenon can be boiled down into various aspects.

To commence with, the fact that the newest generation has been described as a narcissist and lazy generation can be obviously ascribed to the technological factors. Often do they use the digital means to communicate; computers and smart phones are the examples of electronic products that are immensely popular. They take advantage of Facebook, Twitter, Skype and the like to communicate with friends. Thanks to the world's rapid technological change, face-to-face interaction has decreased sharply and it has given rise to a worsening of interpersonal relationships. In Japan, the word "hikikomori" has been coined to refer to the adolescents who always stay at home. We can see that the problem of "socially withdrawn youths" has been brought to light in Hong Kong too. They stay at home and indulge themselves in technology devices. Apart from this, "material girls" in Hong Kong are keen on posting their self-portraits on social websites in a bid to gain likes to satisfy their egos. The above behaviors can apparently show that they are narcissist and lazy.

Another contributing factor is parents. Most parents have been spoiling their children since they were small. Children often take it for granted that parents and the domestic helpers do everything for them. By no means is it surprising that they do not know how to do simple jobs and their self-management skills are exceedingly low. They become lazy as they are pampered. "Kongkid" is a word that reflects their behavior. Some may judge the newest generation as impolite. They do not even say ‘thank you’ when someone does something for them. For those who are adults, they still rely on their parents. Many of them live with their parents and do not know how to be independent. The number of "jobless and schoolless" teenagers has increased drastically.

Apart from that, their attitude is also a significant factor. "Generation Y" is conceited, self-centered and overconfident. Here are some behaviors of a narcissist.
Some of them lack ambition at their workplace; some are reluctant to do extra work and some may overestimate their ability. The capability of crisis management is extremely low because they are overconfident. Young people are spoiled and cannot withstand pressure from society, like a strawberry being squashed when pressed. Moreover, they do not listen to others’ comments and criticism. They often insist that their behavior is justified.

With the factors outlined above, there is no doubt to say the newest generation is lazy and narcissistic. Technology, parents and their attitude are the reasons that can prove the validity of the statement.
Dear Sir/Madam,

As a regular reader of the post, I was brought to notice lately many articles regarding air pollution in Hong Kong. I was quite taken aback when I came across a letter dated 25 July from a reader suggesting to move our children to another country in a bid to prevent them falling victim to lung cancer. Personally, I wouldn’t consider this passive move. Instead, I believe we, Hongkongers, can improve the air quality of the city all by ourselves!

The existing government policy on environmental protection is limited. Instead of solely relying on the government, we can also play a part in reducing toxic pollutants. First and foremost, there are surveys pointing out that exhaust emissions from vehicles is the main source of all the smog we have in Hong Kong. We should take public transport instead of private cars and taxis. The MTR would be the most environmental friendly choice. Besides, it helps lower the number of traffic jams; the combustion of fossil fuels can also be reduced. For the ones who own private cars, they should choose unleaded petrol as well as meet the “switch off idling vehicles” policy with enthusiasm. Saving both money and the environment could undoubtedly kill two birds with one stone.

Moreover, we can use less energy at home. Unless it is very hot and humid, rarely should we turn on the air-conditioner since it releases steam to the outdoor and this indirectly increases the outdoor temperature. If necessary, regulate the indoor temperature at about 25°C. Another thing, which is usually neglected, is lights. They should all be switched off lest it results in wasting electricity. Keep an eye on the energy label when buying electrical appliances and select the more efficient ones in order to reduce the annual energy consumption.

The Singapore government started planting 1 million trees every year 5 decades ago. However, Hong Kong, whose urban and economic developments are both similar to Singapore, has an almost zero tree-planting policy for the time being. Trees absorb carbon dioxide. Rapid logging and deforestation for urban areas has led
to our loss of this natural and free of charge air freshener. Citizens can join the tree-planting schemes held by environmental groups like Greenpeace, to re-vegetate the urban area. This is a fundamental, yet cost effective, method to solve the air-quality problem.

Hong Kong is our home. Every Hongkonger should hold the responsibility to protect the environment. Last but not least, it is meaningless to indulge the above suggestions with empty talk. We should all translate the ideas into action. Once we start putting our words into practice, it helps inspire others to echo the message. We should strive to make our home a better place for ourselves and for our future generations.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing on behalf of a think tank to express my concerns over whether deschooling is a better choice than formal school education. Deschooling is also interpreted as homeschooling. However, wrenchingly, it is still illegal in Hong Kong. Speaking of education, quality far transcends quantity. The quality of it is of utmost importance. For a small city like Hong Kong, formal school education is much more feasible and effective for the most of us. Even so, homeschooling could be the best option for some of our future pillars on the following grounds:

Deschooling is a more flexible approach of education. It allows parents and students to make their own decisions on their learning. Even though they still have to take a certain amount of lessons on different aspects like local school, they, however, could form their own schedule and make good use of their leisure time. Additionally, they could have windows of opportunities to obtain knowledge that they couldn't otherwise acquire through textbooks. Field trips are cases in point. Education shouldn't only be about "spoonfeeding" our next generation with knowledge but also about assisting them to develop their personal interests and logical thinking. Field trips enable learners to switch their learning atmosphere once in a while, which is claimed to be able to refresh their minds and hence improve learning. A family of four, comprising a British father and a Chinese mother in Hong Kong perceived that the Hong Kong education system was too intense for their children. Waking up for school at six in the morning, coming home at four in the afternoon was exhausting enough. But that's not the end of the day. Numerous school assignments and revision of studies are required to be done. Their kids are totally worn out after such a long day. Due to the above reasons, they decided to homeschool their own kids and take them on boat trips around the world, attending lessons tailor-made for both of them. What I am trying to present is that quality education could also be found at home if you wish.

Despite the above, deschooling requires a great amount of financial support. Ensuring that your kids can explore as much as they could in a local school, parents
might need to hire home tutors for certain subjects and purchase some education materials. Geography needs maps, chemistry needs a laboratory, sports require equipment and so on. At the risk of being deprived a proper education, there are potential problems lying under the sugarcoated surface. In a hustle and bustle metropolis like Hong Kong, people excel to make ends meet and make good use of every single second. Only a few lucky individuals could be able to devote both time and money to educating their own children. It’s nearly impossible to have the large amount of money needed and the education resources to cultivate them. If that’s the case, fostering them with a quality education is far beyond most people’s reach.

Undoubtedly, experiencing a tailor-made learning system is ideal for our future pillars. However, the over-riding principle is to have enough resources in the first place. In contrast, traditional schools could offer students with multiple learning tools thus enhancing their education experience. Traditional schools were made to satisfy people’s educational aspirations from different social classes.

Traditional schooling is a standardized evaluation system. Students are promised with an all-rounded education. There are professionals in different subjects offering students valuable information about key fields of knowledge. Teachers provide the knowledge that can’t be entirely found in textbooks and assist in the accelerating of students’ learning. Apart from that, being supervised by mentors could help develop their independence and obedience. In society, these are the keys to success and it’s not what homeschooling can offer. At home, parents can become overly protective and once their kids have adjusted to this atmosphere, they will never be able to live on their own.

On one hand, traditional schools provide students with a well-rounded school life. Schools aim at shaping their students with an out-going personality, resiliently but significantly, so as to achieve a remarkable school life. School is a society in miniature; students can establish their social network by interacting with not only peers but also teachers and school workers. Apart from the above, there are a variety of activities held for them to bond with others. For instance, there are different academic club meetings or functions, group projects, cheerleading practice, community services etc. Traditional schools will never fail to make you feel like home. By helping students to build up their trust in others and develop loving relations, schools can help build one’s self-esteem and confidence. The most lendable fact about schools is that they equip students with the ability of eradicating obstacles.
Not only can schoolwork be irritating but social problems can also be annoying. Doubtless to say, schools are societies in miniature, school experience is what equips you and turns you into an independent, resilient and mature learner. Through overcoming various adversities, people grow stronger and wiser. This valuable and precious education experience can only be offered in traditional schools.

To summarize the above, homeschooling is an extravagant education model compared to the traditional one. However, since parents and their kids have their say about their own learning programme, it is more tailor-made and effective when it comes to learning. Traditional schools, however, provide students with a great social connection, more adversities but crucially more resources to extend their learning criteria. I am of the view that traditional schools are suitable for most of us in an attempt to obtain a cheaper yet all-rounded education programme. In contrast to that, people with better financial support could consider deschooling due to a more flexible and quality education approach.

Yours faithfully,
Jane Li
Let’s Legalize Homeschooling in Hong Kong

6C Richard Loo

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the topic of deschooling, which is identical to homeschooling. According to the report in Wales in 1996, “parents should be responsible for causing their children of compulsory school age to receive efficient full-time education suitable for their age and ability, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”. This has stirred up the public anxiety in Hong Kong. I am of the opinion that home-education is a better option for teenagers.

First and foremost, deschooling facilitates self-motivated learning. In lieu of institutionalized learning, homeschooling provides an alternative means for autonomous learners. Homeschooled children can take the initiative to choose “what, when, which and how” they learn. In other words, they shoulder the full responsibility for their studies. For “what”, they are able to choose the subjects they are passionate about. This enables them to be enthusiastic about studying. For “when”, there are no timetables for homeschooled teenagers. They can opt for an optimum speed, which neither poses a tremendous pressure on them nor make them fall behind the learning schedule. For “where”, there are more opportunities for learners to go out of the conventional classroom and hence, widen their horizons. For “how”, they can discover a comfortable and an effective way to learn. For example, there is a girl who has created a website for trading goods in the summer holidays. Not only did it fulfill personal aspiration, but also reinforced the knowledge of business and social organizing. Given that homeschooling provides students a lot of freedom, it can foster self-motivation.

Moreover, homeschooling provides teenagers with a better learning environment than traditional school education does. There is a myriad of problems in school. Take discriminative bullying as an example, when students compare themselves with each other on either academic results or ownership of luxury goods, discrimination is unavoidable. Unfortunately, schools often turn a blind eye to these problems and this undermines their personal development. When it comes to rules and regulations, children’s creativity and uniqueness are stymied. The matter lies not in the existence and necessity of rules, but the rules trigger off many setbacks in students’ personal development. For example, the tedious and exam-oriented
schedule produces homogenous citizens. As the schools cannot cater for everyone’s educational needs, some may feel frustrated and pessimistic about the pursuit of their own dreams. In this case, the home is a more flexible and learner-centered place for studying.

Some may reckon that homeschooling lacks a platform for teenagers to interact with others and get acquainted with peers, whereas regular schools can do so. However, students of homeschooling, in fact, are more readily willing to talk and to discuss matters. In a case in the United Kingdom, there is a homeschooling association, which holds many sorts of activities and lectures for their kids to exchange ideas with people of different ages and cultural backgrounds. Be it school education or home education, socializing skills can also be thoroughly cultivated.

As the proverb goes, “a coin has two sides”. Although conventional school education has lots of adverse effects, it is pivotal to teenagers who are standing at the crossroads. Undoubtedly, institutionalized school education matches the institutionalized society. Schools have long been of the utmost significance in terms of being a fundamental building block of our society. Provided that the school is approved by the government, the graduation certificate is likely to become a feather in the hat in employers’ eyes. As a consequence, the competitiveness of those students transcends those who have only undergone home education. In this cutthroat and ever-changing world, school education can lead students to a stable and foreseeable future.

By and large, the potential benefits of homeschooling prevail over the pros offered by traditional school education. It is sincerely worth our consideration to examine further the possibility of Hong Kong government adopting the UK system as a reference and legalizing home education.

Yours faithfully,
Richard Loo
Be Grateful, Faithful and Humble – A Book Review

Book Name: Have a little Faith  Author: Mitch Albom
6D Jackie Wong

It was a touching story about how the two men lived their lives with trust in God.

In the beginning of the story, Mitch was asked the same question, “Will you do my eulogy?” by two very different people, an old rabbi and an African-American pastor, Henry, who was a former drug addict. The two men shared nothing in common, except the fact that both of them held on to faith.

The part that impressed me most was how the Rabbi acted after the death of his 4-year-old daughter. At that time, everyone expected him to be depressed, and tried to comfort him. Nevertheless, the Rabbi’s faith to God was not shaken. He thanked God for enabling him to have lived with the lovely girl for 4 years, which was the happiest time ever in his life. It was difficult to imagine losing someone precious. Instead of comparing and complaining, he could still be thankful. As a Christian, I must admit that it is really hard to give thanks when bad things happen to us or to trust that God will make the best plan for us.

Like Mitch, who once thought that his destiny was on his hand, we always forget our weaknesses and think that we are capable of many things. We, being students, are often asked to be strong and be confident in ourselves. Yet, we might not be as tough as we seem, or even as we think. We are just little negligible human beings, fragile but arrogant. That’s why sometimes we bow down before difficulties and feel helpless. It is also the reason why we need faith – to support us through numerous obstacles and give meaning to life.

Having read the book “Have a little faith”, I am fascinated with Mitch Albom’s writing. I really love the tone he uses to tell a story, which is soft, comforting and relieving. Although he always uses simple words to tell a message, the words deeply touch my heart and give me a cleansing experience.

Whether you have a religious faith or not, I believe this book would suit you. Everyone may get different messages from it, but one thing is surely in common - to have a little faith.
Dear Editor,

Recently, the incident of Ms. Lam has come to a moot point in the territory and has aroused heated controversy. Opinions from different groups have divided the spectrum further. While some condemn Ms. Lam’s act as a violation of teachers’ ethics, some back her for her valiant attempt to confront the police force. I, therefore, am writing to express my view on the weighty issue and support her whole-heartedly.

To start with, people might have the wrong focus. People who stood against Ms. Lam pinpointed that being a teacher, Ms. Lam should always act as a role model for students, both at school and in her private life, and be aware of every single word she speaks. Under no circumstance should she let foul language come out of her mouth as this might lead to a misconception that foul language or violence is acceptable and students may follow suit. Their argument might seem plausible and reasonable at first. However, they have put the wrong focus on the issue. Let us ask ourselves a simple question: have we ever spoken any foul language or things that hurt others, be it inside our heart or out of our mouth? Little imagination is needed to know that most of us, if not all, would answer a ‘Yes’. The fact is as simple as it is – that the case of Ms. Lam speaking foul language was merely a slip of the tongue when she was irritated and feeling helpless amid extreme anger, like what most of us do in our daily lives. The limelight should be put on the reasons why Ms. Lam was so outraged, instead of arguing ceaselessly whether speaking foul language is appropriate in such a circumstance.

As far as I am concerned, Ms. Lam has set up a good example for what a citizen should do. Good citizens should stand up and voice out what is pivotal to society. Over the years, teachers’ dispositions are to stay gentle, be caring, humble and calm in front of students. They should always show forgiveness and lead students who go astray back to the right track with their immense love and care. They should also be unbiased on social issues so as not to interfere with students’ perception of society. Nevertheless, teachers are also citizens who ought to have civic awareness and be concerned about social issues that happen in the territory. In the incident, it was feared that freedom of speech and association, which are endorsed by the Basic Law,
were curtailed. Inasmuch as that freedom is the cornerstone of a democratic society and it is of paramount importance to the upholding of the core values of Hong Kong. There exists no reason why Ms. Lam should not express herself. In fact, regardless of our ages, identities, occupations and background, we should realize our privileges, as well as the civic rights to voice out our opinions, instead of being a coward or an indifferent spectator with our arms crossed. Ms. Lam’s courageous act, beyond doubt, has woken the civic awareness of Hong Kong people, promoting our reflection on civic values and responsibilities.

Aside from these, that CY Leung asked for a thorough report from Education Bureau and the involvement of the Crime Unit Team have inevitably sparked off public suspicion. Since Ms. Lam had done nothing wrong other than use foul language, in no way should the police force and the Education Bureau become involved. It is reasonable that the society, thereby, sees that the issue is being politicalized and the government is making a mountain out of a molehill. The suspicion of her hidden agenda will, without a shadow of doubt, pose a threat to the governance of Hong Kong in the future.

Taking everything into account, I believe Ms. Lam’s action is worth supporting. It also reveals that there are underlying contradictions in the political environment in Hong Kong. Admit it or not, it deserves our utmost concern.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dealing with a Nuisance

6D John Lo

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of my fellow neighbors to complain about a very annoying scene taking place in our estate in the middle of the night. Anyone with a sane mind will notice that playing music loudly at night will surely bother his neighbors. But there is still an exception. Mr. Ng, who moved in two weeks ago, is currently playing his electric guitar starting from 11 p.m. through the whole night. Being bothered, I cannot sleep well due to the disturbing noise. Hoping that I may have a chance to solve the problem, I told Mr. Ng a week ago that his electric guitar is generating far too much noise, and on behalf of the neighborhood, we would like him to cease playing his guitar late at night. Despite our endeavor, the situation remains unchanged. Now, the neighborhood would like the Management Office to take action to better the situation.

This was what I have encountered. One day late at night when I was soundly asleep, I was awakened by a great deal of noise. I checked the time and was shocked to see that it was 11:30 p.m. At first, I thought it was thunder or some sort of car crash, then I listened and heard a melody of a song, more precisely, the latest song by Mr. Bean. Therefore, I suddenly realized that it was somebody playing the guitar. Then, I rushed out of my house and started to search for the source of the noise. It was very easy to locate where it came from as the song was played increasingly louder. And this was how I found it was coming from Mr. Ng’s house, whose master has just moved in a couple of days ago. The following day when I was reading a newspaper in my front yard, some of my other neighbors like Mr. Chan and Miss. Chow approached me and said that they had heard the noise and were greatly bothered by it. So, the following day, we paid Mr. Ng a visit and urged him to stop playing music late at night since it was too much to bear. Mr. Ng did not pay attention to what we said. Worse still, he continued to play his electric guitar late at night and ignored our advice. He said he would only play his guitar at night as he had some sort of inspiration at night. With that sort of attitude, this man is putting the neighborhood’s comfort on the line, and if nothing is done, he will not cease it.

Some may say that we may be infringing on his basic rights, but there are alternative ways out there. He can turn the volume down, or plug in a pair of
earphones so the sound is transmitted only into his ears and not across the neighborhood, or he may even install sound-absorbing materials in his house to prevent sound leakage. Once again, we hope that the Management office may take this seriously, and take action to ameliorate the situation.

In case of inquiry, I can be contacted via phone at 5369 8821 or e-mail at chris@gmail.com. Once again, thank you for your attention, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
It was 27\textsuperscript{th} of September, my mum’s birthday. I brought her to a famous French restaurant for lunch because I’d heard that she had been waiting to have a meal there for a long time. The restaurant was huge and luxurious, which impressed both of us. After we had ordered the food, I took out the present that I’d prepared - a necklace with a few crystals on it. As everybody did, I wondered whether my mum would love it or not. But it was awkward to ask because every time I did it, I got a fake answer.

At that moment, however, I thought I heard something, “Wow! This is very nice from my son.” I took a look at mum, and surprisingly noticed that she wasn’t talking to me, she was just looking at the necklace instead. She continued without moving her lips, “But this is too expensive ... I shall tell him.” Then she told me she was thankful but that I should not buy her any expensive goods next time. I must say I was shocked instantly. Was that just implying that I had some special ability such as reading someone else’s mind?

Out of curiosity, I tried everyone in the restaurant. That fat guy in the corner was intensely thinking about having a night with a sexy lady who was sitting at the other corner. The old man sitting next to me was thinking about Ben, which was the name of his son, and the waitress walking towards us was going to ask what else we wanted to order. “Sorry to bother, but would you like something else?” the waitress asked. “Bingo!” I cheered a little bit inside my mind.

After we had finished our sweet meal, as scheduled, I brought mum to meet her old friends to play Mahjong and then I left. However, I heard the voice in mum’s mind, saying that she would like my company better than the Mahjong game, but she couldn’t say that, worrying it would waste my time. So I said, “Let’s go together! Today’s your birthday!” and I saw my mum smiling, sincerely.

During the first few games, my mum lost. She called me for help as I was watching TV in the dining room. Because of my ability, mum got her luck back just as I stepped in the room. I read through all my aunties’ minds and told my mum so that she might come up with a winning solution. Throughout the whole afternoon, my mum didn’t lose a single game. These aunties complained a lot about it, asking if
mum could bring no one next time so that they could have a fair game. Mum and I laughed out loud and we said goodbye, then headed back home.

We were sitting in my car, on our way home, listening to some soft music. I could see my mum had closed her eyes, as if she was sleeping. So I focused on my driving. And mum suddenly broke the silence, “Thank you for today, for taking me everywhere, being with me everywhere.” She stopped. When I was about to say something, she continued, “Well, today was a good day as we have won a lot of money. And you look a little different from usual. You acted like you are ... kind of ... uh ... like a mentalist, reading minds ... stuff like that. I don’t really care what you are doing, or if you are reading my mind now,” this time she got me. I was really trying, but in vain. And I tried again, and again. It was still not working. “I am going to say it out of my mouth to you in person, son, I love you.” I stopped trying as she said that. It seemed like there’s no need to read minds anymore, as long as there’s love. I understand, if you never say it, the others will never get it. In contrast, if you are meant to know it, there’s no need to say it. However, although something is pretty obvious, you have to say it in order to let others really know it. So, what’s the point of reading minds?

“I love you too, mum.” I said in reply.
Can We Expect Them To Steer Our Future?

6D Lysander Yuen

Following the latest disgruntled depiction of the newest generation from the world famous news magazine, Time, numerous controversies have been triggered amongst the public about the flaws of the newest generation. The journalist has expressed his dissatisfaction with the newest generation as they are narcissist and lazy. While many point out how offensive that comment is, I reckon that the report does have its persuasiveness.

The newest generation has put their own privilege as their first priority in any case without mercy. They believe they are always the ones who need to be served first. Several news reports mentioned that the most recent generation believes the boss has the obligation to guide them to finish all the work regardless of the nature of the work. On the other hand, this same generation has revealed that they refuse to participate in any volunteer work since they deem those activities as time wasting and unprofitable. These incidents imply that the latest generation has placed their focus on themselves and are complacent under all circumstances. They plead for help without gratitude. Possessing an overbearing manner, this most recent generation frustrates every employer deliberately.

Strange as it may sound, the newest generation is in fact too idle to accomplish their aims despite the fact that they are well-educated. The newest generation has acquired knowledge from quality-guaranteed sources. They are fruitful in their brain. Nevertheless, they are also indolent in their body. Living in a society surrounded by a constantly changing environment, the newest generation has failed to concentrate on their own careers. Instead, they enjoy obsessing over the latest technology. Employers said that workers from this new generation enjoy watching movies on their smartphone during breaks rather than sharing experiences with veterans. This lack of motivation from the new generation has prompted them to skive work whenever possible.

Worst still, the newest generation does not aim high in their careers, but aim high in their indulgences. The new generation aspires to be the pioneers in the fields of fashion, games and relationships. It is acceptable for them to be interested in these fields. However, career and family should take priority. The newest generation exerts too much emphasis on making themselves competitive in these recreations.
Being the expected new driving force of our society, the latest generation is supposed to be vigorous in improving themselves. It is no exaggeration to say that the newest generation would definitely fail to steer the future of our society due to the inability to distinguish between the must and the must not.

To conclude, the newest generation is not good enough to be the future driving force of our society as its members are narcissist and idle.
Dear Sir or Madam,

Re: Complaint Against the Unbearable Noise of Electric Guitar from a Neighbour

I am the owner of Flat D, 15th Floor, Tower 3 of Greenville Garden, writing to lodge a complaint about the intolerable circumstance attributed by the persisting clamor of the electric guitar produced every night by my neighbour who moved in recently, despite my effort in expressing my grievance towards his egoistic behavior in person repeatedly.

Everything altered thoroughly since my neighbour, Mr. Liu, moved in Flat C two months ago. Initially, I dare say I was indeed flabbergasted to catch sight of an assortment of electric guitars with a variety of brands that were delivered to his apartment. Notwithstanding the astonishment, I reckoned that it would by no means pose a menace to my routine or exert any nuisance to me, provided that he merely played the musical instruments in the daytime during my working hours in the office. However, it has been too early to get a valid conclusion and my enduring nightmares were yet to come.

At around 11 p.m. during the first night of Mr. Liu’s residence, there was a sudden thunderous sound emitted by the electric guitar penetrating through every piece of the walls and windows of my house. Deplorably, I tried to cover my ears with earplugs but to no avail. One could imagine how disgusting and irritating the disturbance has been to my wife and I. Worse still, he proceeded to pluck his guitar and play deafening rock and roll music continuously even after the arrival of midnight. I could barely find a moment of relief let alone take a peaceful slumber. The noise has begun to drive me insane, especially whenever the amplifier is on. Being outraged by the annoyance, I had no alternative but to knock on his door with great exertion, trying to dissuade him from doing so. After an entire 10 minutes had passed, Mr. Liu finally came to the door. I immediately requested him to cease playing the electric guitar. However, what I had suffered ultimately was an assaulting insult. From that day on, my neighbour has played his electric guitar from 11 p.m. every night, and I profoundly believed that I would be diagnosed with an illness due to insomnia and sleep deprivation. The unacceptable attitude and the inconsiderate misbehavior of

My Grievance Towards an Egoistic Neighbour

6E Evan Wong
Mr. Liu has indisputably hampered the other residents’ lives and damaged both our physical and mental health.

For the sake of public interest, your Management office is obliged to take swift action in a bid to alleviate the aforementioned problem lest it should further aggravate and escalate to an unimaginable consequence. I am grateful if you could kindly follow up the issue by sending a warning letter to the flat concerned to ensure that the resident, Mr. Liu, will comply with the estate regulations. The Management office should also report the progress of its investigation to me within no more than twenty days. Should you have any enquiries for further details of the incident, please contact me via telephone at 9876-4321 or via e-mail at chriswongkk@gmail.com. I will be available for any assistance in order to avoid a repeat occurrence of this unpleasant and sorrowful incident on the other residents.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
In 2008, thanks to the slogan – ‘change’, for which Americans were looking, Barack Obama garnered support from people from all walks of life, be it the rich or the impoverished. Sadly, most people, if not all, are not satisfied with the changes. That is why they are hoping to have a transformation. Speaking of ‘change’, nonetheless, many of us will not take the initiative mainly because we are not audacious enough. Yet, on second thought, who would repudiate a good change to better one’s life? For the time being, so fortunate it is that the school’s debating club will give you a different taste of how campus life should be. With the benefits and importance of debating, you are able to get on a new P.A.T.H.

To commence with, ‘P’ stands for ‘Participation’. Being a member of the club, one can take part in an array of debates. Indubitably, some may say that they cannot speak fluently nor can they boldly debate with one another. This is the greatest hesitation to join the team. However, ‘when there is a will, there is a way’. As long as you are willing to improve, there are ways to do so. Indeed, we pay heed to every member in the club. Different kinds of training, ranging from debating skills to impeccable pronunciation or speech writing skills will be offered to our members. After 2 months, you will be expected to be able to speak confidently. Not only this, with the professional training, you will be capacitated to deliver impromptu speeches with convincing rebuttals. With determined participation, you may be one of the best debaters on stage one day.

Your participation brings you ‘A’, ‘Achievement’, which plays an indispensable role in your campus life. Attributing to the long history of our club, to other schools in the community, we are their eminent competitors. Numerous debating competitions are held in the coming months. With the intensive training that members receive, we are about to overwhelm other participants and win the competitions, if not the championship. Experience proves that our debaters are the best of the best as we are always awarded the best debater titles. If you join the debating club, the above achievements do not only colour your campus life, but they are also imperative for your Student Learning Profile.
Apart from the benefits of being in the club, being a good debater is also important in life.

As a debater, you will learn the true meaning of ‘Teamwork’. Other than having good debating skills, a good debater should also be willing to listen to others. That we always listen to ourselves and neglect others’ opinion has been a feature of young people nowadays. Communication barriers are created as a result. However, in preparing for debating competitions, teamwork is always the prerequisite for victory. You have to pay attention to your teammates’ point of view so that you can come up with structured arguments and persuasive rebuttals. This is not a one-man band. To respect and accept others’ opinion is to learn from your friends and in the end, you are the ones who get the most.

Last but not least, being a good debater means you will have ‘Happiness’ in your life. As you can speak fluently with confidence and you are able to think critically about different issues, your self-esteem is going to be boosted. Presently, teenagers do not lead happy lives because of their low-esteem. They are dissatisfied with their inability and lack of achievement. They just think they have nothing to appreciate. On the contrary, when you look at yourself as the greatest debater, you will recognize everything you have. Your capability to deliver excellent speeches is what others long for. When your self-esteem is high, you will definitely enjoy your days more happily.

Having read the whole article, are you ready to have a diametrical life? If you want to have greater achievements through participating in extra-curricular activities, the Debating Club must be your first choice. Come on! Join us and walk on a new P.A.T.H.
Flip through the television programme guide and you are bound to see that the content of the shows is nothing more than deceitfulness, violence and pornography. It is thus said that much of popular television promotes negative values. When asked whether this statement is valid, my answer is a resounding yes. The reasons are as follows.

To commence with, we can look deep into a local TV show, "Triumph in the skies II". It has been put under the spotlight thanks to the huge success of the first episode of the series. The show, however, has received myriads of complaints while being broadcasted. The reason behind this is that explicit sex scenes were shown when it described the relationship between the staff of an airline company despite the fact that the programme was broadcast during the prime time. This phenomenon is commonplace in different TV shows, most of which show superfluous steamy scenes in a bid to attract people’s eyeballs. Another notorious illustration would be the “Miss Hong Kong Pageant”. It promotes “The Part of Bikini” so hard that it has actually attached too much importance to the body of women. As a result, an indecent value has been spread to the public.

Besides, violence is also disseminated by many TV shows, one of these being a Taiwanese programme called “Monga Yao Hui”. It is mainly a story of a triad gang. Fight and blood are ubiquitous elements in the show. By its characterization, hitting people seems to be a valiant action for adolescents. It is in all likelihood that teenagers will build up wrong outlooks on life after being affected by this kind of show. It is thus clear that violence is being promoted in TV day by day.

Last but by no means least; deceitfulness can be always seen in numerous TV shows. Recently, a programme has swept across Mainland China, Taiwan and also Hong Kong. The title of it is “Empresses in the Palace”. The story was set in Qing dynasty, revolving around the conflicts between the concubines of the emperor. In spite of being highly hailed, it is criticized for spreading wrong values to the audience. It can be represented by a quote from the show, which is “kind people cannot beat bad people. The only way for the kind people to win is to become bad, even worse than those”, interpreted from Chinese. Similar subjects can be observed in other shows. For instance, “Di Jin”, which is a Chinese-Korean collaborated TV programme.
The main idea of it is “an eye for an eye”. This reveals that not only shows in China but also those in Korea are promoting negative values. Certainly, the situation is similar all over the world.

To encapsulate, concrete proof can verify that many, if not all, popular television shows are propagating negative values to the general audience. In addition, this conclusion will maintain its persuasiveness in a near future if nothing is done to deter the situation. For the sake of our future generations, this phenomenon has to be ameliorated immediately.
Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my opinion about the growing scene of busking in the local territory. The prevalence of this phenomenon is attributed to several factors.

First and foremost, buskers lack the right place to give performances due to the limited space in Hong Kong. Although there are a number of concert halls, their rent is not affordable to buskers. They do not have any chance to promote themselves and cannot ensure how many people would come to their concerts. Therefore, they think that it is not worth facing the debt after the shows. This seriously impedes the development of art in Hong Kong owing to insufficient funds. Also, it is a formidable difficult task for buskers to book a concert hall even though they have a huge budget since the government always gives the orchestra the top priority in using the hall. On the other hand, it is free for buskers to perform in the busy shopping districts anytime they want. They just need to purchase some basic equipment and start busking any time without restrictions.

Moreover, busking may help build up their acting careers. In the busy shopping districts, there are numerous pedestrians, walking through the streets at night, who are easily attracted by the versatile buskers. As their great performance is uploaded to YouTube, more people can get acquainted with them in a short period of time. There is no lack of buskers who get well known after performing in the streets, for instance, Lung Siu Kwan, a former street performer who used to have singing shows in Mong Kok and eventually caught the attention of talent scouts because of her fabulous voice. Being discovered by a recording agency, she fulfilled her dream and became a professional singer in Hong Kong. It shows that busking in the public realm really provides a chance for people to achieve their goals.

In the following, I would like to share some benefits and harms that busking may bring to our city and its citizens.

Hong Kong is a fast-paced city, about which there is no doubt. The citizens always need to focus on their work from dawn to dusk and this gives them a lot of pressure. Listening to some music from buskers on the way home helps them relax...
and get away from the hustle and bustle. Since the citizens can stay to watch the performances for as long as they want and they only pay the buskers if they think the shows are worthy of praise, they become more eager to enjoy the shows and have fun with them as these performances usually entail crowd participation.

In addition, busking provides an opportunity for people to share their leisurely interests with others. Due to the informal nature of the performance, the pedestrians and buskers can talk to each other anytime. It enhances the communication among Hong Kong people and their enthusiasm for art.

It is beyond doubt that busking may bring some drawbacks to our city. Some people may criticize the buskers for occupying huge amounts of space in busy shopping districts. This causes jams along the pedestrian pathways and brings inconvenience to passers-by. On the other hand, some dwellers may grumble that the sound of the performance sickens them and they cannot stand the deafening loud noise.

As far as I am concerned, the advantages of busking prevail over its disadvantages since the buskers in Hong Kong have already made every endeavor to cater for different needs and the nearby residents can protect their right through complaining to the government department whenever necessary. Therefore, in these few years, the number of conflicts between the residents and buskers has significantly headed into a steep dive.

These days, most Hong Kong people are becoming more familiar with busking. In order to promote these activities, I hope the government could take videos of the busking performances and broadcast them to the public on TV. Meanwhile, the government may also organize an election for people to vote for their favorite buskers and gather the winning performers to have a show in the concert hall. I firmly believe that these activities can enable more people to become fond of watching the performances of buskers and can boost the development of art in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am Jessica Tse speaking for Hong Kong Unison, a non-government organization which pledges to serve the ethnic minority Hong Kong residents and their families.

I am here to speak for the Nepali in Hong Kong. I am here to speak for the Indians in Hong Kong. I am here to speak for all ethnic minorities who suffer from racial discrimination in Hong Kong. The reason why I am standing here is to tell you adults that you must put an end to racial discrimination in the education system immediately.

In Hong Kong, there are over 120,000 ethnic minority students. But most of them are denied access to quality education because of poor education policies. Many minority students cannot catch up with the Chinese language at school, especially at Chinese Medium (CMI) Schools because they lack support in Chinese education. In addition to the language barrier, minority students also need to cope with cultural differences. Different ethnic groups have different cultures; however the majority of the local Chinese have low tolerance for foreign cultures. Such disapproving attitude in society has led to discrimination against minority students at school. Minority students are often bullied by their Chinese classmates and even ill-treated by their teachers. They are not only physically bullied but also mentally abused. They may face name-calling, racial-slurring and even racial segregation at school. Such unfair treatment makes them feel that they are a minority and they are excluded by Hong Kong society. They will feel more inferior and have a low self-esteem. Let me tell you about the misfortune of a Muslim girl, Taibah, in Hong Kong. Her Chinese classmates said that her homemade food was poo and her school did not allow her to wear her headscarf at school without giving her any reason. Taibah was no exceptional case. Below is the story of a strict-A kindergarten graduate, Abdullah. He represented the students to address the graduation ceremony and he, being seen as an outstanding student at kindergarten, has high hopes for himself. His parents were painting all their hopes on St. Margaret’s, a band one English primary school. However, the school rejected Abdullah’s application without stating any reason. Abdullah’s father thought they rejected his son because of his race, because he is not Chinese, but a Pakistani. The above examples show that ethnic minority students are facing blatant discrimination in Hong Kong’s education system.
Maybe you will say that ethnic minorities are already protected by the law in Hong Kong. It’s true that the three-year-old Racial Discrimination Ordinance has made life easier for ethnic minorities. However, the legislation does not cover racial and religious bigotry. We cannot say that the schools mentioned above have violated the law but no one can deny that their actions are a kind of indirect discrimination. Maybe you will say the Education Bureau is already there to deal with all education-related affairs. However, when Abdulla’s parents asked them for help, the EDB did not conduct any investigation, but just suggested they apply to other schools. We can see that the EDB has not done enough to safeguard the interests of ethnic minority students.

At school, even in kindergarten, you adults teach us how to behave and how to treat others. You teach us not to ridicule. You teach us to help the weak, to respect and to show empathy. Then why can’t you do what you teach us to do when dealing with ethnic minority students? They are also Hong Kong residents, the same as you and me. We are all part of Hong Kong. Then, why do you ignore their needs?

You also have children and you are parents, too. Imagine your child is bullied at school just because they are Chinese. Imagine your child is denied access to a high-bandung school just because they share your skin colour. Imagine your child’s classmates call your child’s Chinese dim sums poo. How would you feel? Is it something that you can live with and ignore? Is this what you call quality education and inclusive education? This is what each and every ethnic minority child is facing at the moment.

To help the minority students, you should spare no effort in promoting cultural diversity at school to encourage students to cross the cultural divide. You should monitor the work of the designated schools to ensure that they are making good use of the additional resources. You should open all contract posts in the civil service to provide more job opportunities for ethnic minority students.

Do not forget why you are attending this conference. You always say that you pledge to provide quality education to students in Hong Kong. Please make your actions reflect your words. Thank you.
Television has taken over and has been embedded in our daily lives since the 1950s, and its popularity among different demographics is indisputable. Whether they are teens enjoying an idol drama, or families gathering for a soap opera, escaping from this omnipresent media seems impossible nowadays. Some claim that TV shows promote inspirational values as myriads of success stories can be seen on TV. However, it is not necessarily the case. Much of popular television promotes negative values, of which most can be boiled down into the following aspects.

To commence with, TV shows promote consumerism. In numerous cases, product placement appears in TV shows. Taking Idol dramas from Japan and Taiwan as an example, it is not uncommon to see the characters in one drama using mobiles of the same brand, or drinking the soft drinks by the same company. The intention of these kinds of recessive advertisements is to reduce audiences’ psychological resistance to TV commercials, in an attempt to encourage audiences to consume their products, thus boosting sales. In addition, to a large extent, TV shows promote conspicuous consumption and materialism while many of them portray characters with relatively high quality of lives but not the grassroots. For instance, the protagonists of TVB’s soap dramas are usually depicted as well-dressed middle classes who can easily spend their money on brand name goods, large houses and luxury cars. This gives the audience the wrong perception that being well-off means that money can be spent on whatever they want and like without thinking thoroughly. Throughout the TV shows, a materialistic message is sent out and takes root in the audiences’ mind imperceptibly. People may worship brand names and thus negative values about consumption are cradled.

Besides the underlying materialistic message, TV shows should also be responsible for misrepresenting reality and instilling distorted values to audiences. Reality shows are defined as “a genre of television programming that documents unscripted situations and actual occurrences, and often features a previously-unknown cast”. Yet, as seen in innumerous reality shows, the fact is that unscripted situations are usually not what they present. Instead, a deceptive, deliberately manufactured “reality” is introduced to the audience. Sometimes it may even lead to distorted values and reality. In a recent local reality show “Bride Wannabes”, a group of five women, mostly in their 30s, put themselves in the hands
of love and life coaches for six months in the hope of boosting their marriage prospects. The show has triggered controversies since its first broadcast for its authenticity. Some of the participants were revealed to be relatives of the production team; some of them are even actors. 23 commercial operators are included in the first five shows, including dating companies, beauty salons and restaurants, making the show more an advertising package than a reality show. What brings the criticisms to the peak is that the show indoctrinates people with wrong messages by sending the idea that cosmetic surgery, crafted smart talk and the following of a set of rules in mature flirting can help find love before it is too late. The show is also condemned for belittling women. All of the above criticisms suggest that negative and improper values can be implanted into people during TV shows.

In the third place, much of popular television promotes violence and hostility. “Revenge”, an American television primetime series that airs on ABC, is the highest rated television overall in the hour in more than five years since “Lost”. Nevertheless, the correctness of the messages conveyed is still debatable. In the story, the leading character intends to get revenge on all the people who had a part in destroying her childhood and worked with her rival to wrongfully convict her father. This sort of vindictive, hateful characters is glutted in much of popular television along with excessive violence, promoting negative values such as to tackle problems by illegal and violent means. Similarly, the Hong Kong Modern Drama “Heart of Greed” depicts family members who keep plotting against each other. The way these vengeful and double-faced characters behave may instill in the audience wrong concepts like nobody can be trusted, so their faith in others could be undermined.

All things considered, despite the popularity of television, there are still a series of negative values it includes, ranging from materialism to unnecessary violence, that should be rectified.
1984 is a classic dystopian novel by George Orwell. The story focuses on Winston Smith, an everyman who lives in Oceania - a future state where the ruling political party, the quasi-divine Party, controls everything. The leader of the party is Big Brother, who enjoys an intense cult like personality, but who may not even exist. Winston is a lower member of the Outer Party who works for the Ministry of Truth, whose job is to re-write past newspaper articles so that the historical record always supports the party, thus making the party seems omniscient. However, he is not totally brainwashed by the party. He worries about the state, and he keeps a diary of his anti-government thoughts, which gets him into jeopardy in the later part of the story because of the telescreens hidden with microphones and cameras. In the story, he is in love with Julia from the Fiction Department. They have to meet, sleep together secretly since love and sex are both prohibited in Oceania. These actions are spied by the Thought Police and Winston is brought to Room 101 for torture. In the end, he betrays Julia. He becomes loyal to Big Brother again.

To me, the story is not merely deplorable, but also sarcastic. There are three slogans of the party: War is Peace. Freedom is Slavery. Ignorance is Strength. Other than that, the Ministry of Truth is responsible for historical revisionism, the Ministry of Love is responsible for torment - they do not solely represent the black humour of the author, they also unveil the unjustifiable and harsh circumstances under the domination of totalitarianism. The past is controlled, rewritten into something that will consolidate the incumbent ruler. “Who controls the past, controls the future. Who controls the present, controls the past.” Who loses himself and dedicates himself to the party will be immortal and impregnable. The ‘truth’ is what the state says. The words of the state prevail over everything, even the apparent reality. In this case, what if the state says, black can be white, just like Winston is coerced to believe that 2+2=5?

The deplorable part of this story is that, under the domination of authoritarianism, it is hard to hold to the truth. Any anti-government, critical thought could be condemned as crime and be penalized. People might even betray each other in order to ingratiate the governor, people could become numb. This reminds me of the Cultural Revolution in China from 1966 to 1976. Mao is like the Big Brother.
and the Red Guard is like the Thought Police. After the Cultural Revolution, the ‘Lost Generation’, a generation that lacked sufficient education, was nurtured, countless scholars fled overseas, myriads of innocent people were tortured to death. It brought a decline in the moral standard of China. From history, we can learn how catastrophic a society would be under authoritarianism. Thereby, we should take a skeptical view and follow our mind; we shouldn’t bow to any vicious power. Otherwise, our future will be gloomy and doomed.
Dear Jacky,

Hello! It has been ages since we last met. Are you still so addicted to comics and animations? Hope you have become more in control of the money and time you spend on your newly acquired interest after I have left for college in the states.

Well, I also find Japanese comics and animations very interesting and fascinating. Their plot is always very intriguing and the characters are just like our real-life friends. They give us so much pleasure, and they provide us a break from our hectic life. The heroes and heroines in the cartoons may face numerous obstacles, but in the end good will always triumph over evil. The protagonists always manage to get their way round the challenges. Maybe it’s the only place we can find justice and fairness nowadays. To be honest, when I was young, I was also attracted by the good looks and the impressive talents of the characters, wishing I could be like them one day.

Sometimes, I would also treat myself with some cartoons and comics during long school breaks, seeking refuge from the harsh reality and exam stress in order to rewire my brain with positivity and happiness. Frankly speaking, there’s nothing wrong for a teenager to cultivate an interest in order to alleviate the pressure in life. It’s so unfair that they label us as hermit crabs or otaku. But there should be a limit to the pursuit of our passion. Nothing is right when we go to the extreme.

But spending almost all of your free time on comics and cartoons is another thing. Nobody would doubt that students in Hong Kong are under great pressure and it seems we are entitled to spoil ourselves with some relaxing breaks once in a while, but we should not indulge ourselves in animation and manga, at the expense of our rest time, depriving ourselves the chance to recover our strength, both mentally and physically. Every time I chat with you online, you say you are still watching cartoons or reading comics, even if it is already 3 am in Hong Kong and sometimes the next day is still a school day. I guess, at most, you can only have 3-4 hours of sleep, which is far less than enough for your body to regenerate and regain strength. A healthy sleeping habit is vital for academic success, not to mention its importance for the
public exams that you are going to sit for in three months’ time. As your friend, I really worry about your health and your studies if you continue to deprive yourself of so much rest and sleep. I believe that you should change this unhealthy and harmful lifestyle immediately.

Moreover, it’s also inappropriate to spend so much money on comics and their related merchandise. Well, sometimes I may buy some posters or figurines featuring my favourite cartoon characters, to show support for the cartoon producers or comic’s artists, but spending extortionate amounts of money is another thing. You should not spend beyond your means, especially when you are still financially reliant on your parents. You should not spend their money indiscriminately. It took years of blood, sweat and tears for your parents to establish what they now have. Their money should be channeled to your education, to your care and your food. Last time, you told me you had placed a bid for a figurine on eBay. It had cost you HKD10,000, which was almost ten times of your monthly pocket money and more than one third of a fresh graduate’s salary. You have gone too far. Your passion has become your obsession. It’s time for you to stop and to ponder on your deeds.

No offense, but you have gone too far already. Don’t let your parents down. Otherwise, one day you will regret not having worked harder academically but instead diverting too much of your time and effort on comics and animation. One day, when you live on your own expenses, you will realize that you should have spent each and every penny more carefully and more wisely. As an old friend, I feel I have the duty to express my concern to you.

I have to drop my pen now. Please write back and let me know your concerns. Don’t be a stranger.

Love,
Chris
Chris
When it comes to the newest generation, what immediately springs to mind may be a group of teenagers bursting with vitality. Lamentably, this seems no longer applicable to the present situation. The latest Time magazine has described the future mainstay as a narcissist and lazy generation. Such condemnation is not unwarranted. They idle the days away, playing computer games or watching TV, oblivious to their responsibility and the dissatisfaction of the surrounding people. There are three reasons to which the problem can be attributed.

Firstly, the heavy workload sheds light on their inertia. Saddled with tremendous homework, numerous examinations and countless extracurricular activities, they possess very limited free time. It is understandable that they are too exhausted to pay attention to other things such as volunteering and exercise. Also, with the development of the smart phone and computer, adolescents are inclined to stay at home, spending their leisure and recreation time playing with the latest technological gadgets. Therefore, they are condemned to idleness.

Moreover, parenting style contributes to the problem. Recently, some parents have been stereotyped as ‘helicopter parents’ because of their excessive care for their children. They provide their children with not only everything they need, but also everything they want. Newspapers have reported that some parents nowadays accompany their children to take part in the recruitment interview or even look for jobs and fill in application forms for their children. Therefore, many youngsters take their material life as well as the help from parents and domestic helpers for granted. Being protected, the teenagers become the flowers in the greenhouse and see themselves as princes and princesses. Gradually, they lack the independent ability and become more and more self-centred, narcissistic and lazy.

What about the graduates? Neither are they burdened with academic stress, nor are they immature to live independently. Why are they so lazy?

The lack of opportunity and the dilemma of further studies and obtaining employment may explain the problem. Being a university student is by no means easy in Hong Kong. The rate of getting an undergraduate degree offer is lower than 20%, while the rate in America, South Korea and Taiwan is 50%, 80% and nearly 100%
respectively. Besides, the graduates with an associate degree have a lower salary than their bachelor degree counterparts. Some employers do not even accept them.

In the respect of occupation, because of the simple economic structure and the limited sorts of industries in Hong Kong, the newest generation lacks opportunity for promotion. Also, their working attitude is different to previous generations. Many of them refuse to work from scratch and they find it difficult to take up an occupation. Being helpless, they do not have the motivation to work or merely to find a job, so they prefer to stay at home and stay idle.

Death Valley in the USA is famous for the absence of life. Surprisingly, with only 7 inches of rainfall over a very short period in 2004, Death Valley was soon carpeted in flowers in 2005. It was an unbelievable discovery for many that there was life beneath the surface of Death Valley, only waiting for the right conditions. Patently, the key here is the precise conditions.

Should society provide a comprehensive education that is not weighted in favour of academic results, should the parents encourage young people to be independent and pursue their own dreams, should youngsters have the opportunities for further studies and work, there will be conditions for thriving development. At the end of the day, this generation will not only refuse to be narcissistic and lazy but also be willing to create a rosy future.
Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Complaint About the Disturbance of Noise

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the disturbance by my neighbour who currently plays an electric guitar at 11pm every night. Being irritated by his perennial noise, I always fail to fall asleep. To my dismay, I tried in vain to dissuade him from playing at bedtime. It is hoped that the Management Office could address this problem.

The noise at night is polluting our environment. According to a science investigation, everlasting noise increases adrenalin. It not only makes humans exhausted and fiery, but also increases the risk of having high blood pressure, which constitutes a menace to people’s health. For the sake of the good night’s rest of the residents, improving the situation is of paramount importance.

In my opinion, the Management Office could send a letter and have a serious conversation with him. I suggest mentioning two points.

Firstly, you may express that his neighbours were extraordinarily upset by his behaviour. Playing music can ease stress and bring a lot of leisure. However, if he sees things through his neighbours’ eyes, he will find that he is creating his delight at the expense of others’ rest time and health. Only if everyone takes others’ feeling into account can our living environment become a better place.

Secondly, you may recommend to him to have his flat soundproofed. Examined in the context of Hong Kong, citizens are too occupied to have free time. It is entirely understandable that he is not available until 11pm. In this case, sound proofing may cope with this problem, creating a win-win situation – everyone can savour the night with relish.

Lastly, if he refuses to talk with you or dismiss your persuasion, you may report to the police office or the Environment Protection Department.
The Management Office has established a reputation for providing a comfortable and relaxing environment for the residents. I hope you can keep the reputation by your action and I am convinced that you attach great importance to the benefits of residents. It is hoped that this perpetual problem can be solved as soon as possible. Thank you for addressing this problem.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Recently, society has been in deep discussion on the topic “Should adult children take care of their parents?” This seems meaningless for me as in my mind, it is my responsibility to take care of my elderly parents when I am capable of doing so. They are definitely not financial burdens and I don’t think that it is necessary to implement a law so as to force adult children to take care of their elderly parents. However, the frustrating fact is that many people forget this obligation and they are reluctant to concern themselves with the lives of their elderly parents. Imagine if you were in your golden years, your adult children would not be able to give you support or help but sent you to nursing homes instead. How would you feel? I don’t understand why children help their friends but refuse to care for their parents. This is absurd, don’t you think?

To begin with, I reckon that my view of taking care of my elderly parents comes from the spirit of filial piety, the most important spirit in Chinese culture. Confucianism, the main component of Chinese culture puts filial piety as utmost significance because this is the key to being a man of honour. Under the education and the nurture of filial piety, I hold firmly to the belief that taking care of my elderly parents is not only an obligation, but a definitely privilege. Therefore, I could not even think of not caring for my parents when I grow up. Thus, I state my opinion that we should take care of our elderly parents.

Some may say that no matter what parents have done for them, they could not give up their jobs and become the ones to care for their parents. They disagree profoundly that we have to sacrifice in a bid to care for our elderly parents, otherwise nursing homes would not have any business. I don’t deny that we need to take the freedom of everyone into consideration. It is perceived that visiting parents once or twice a week is the least we can do to make our parents feel being loved as well as special. However, I am saddened by the fact that some adult children abandon their parents for the reason that they are preoccupied with their careers, with some even forbidding parents to live in their house; subsequently, they take them to the care center. Little do I know the reason for doing this. In my opinion, no matter how busy we are, we still have to take care of our elderly parents not only for my thought on filial piety but also for my conscience. Aged parents who have made countless sacrifices to look after their growing children deserve to be looked after.
When they are too old to fend for themselves, don’t they?

When it comes to the reason why I am in the affirmative, in spite of filial piety and conscience, it is an inevitable responsibility for us to look after our aged parents. Although in western countries, the governments provide sufficient social welfare and implement filial responsibility laws so that adult children, have to support their elderly parents financially and this enables the aged parents to have a better live. The law applies to all citizens unless they have been victims of family abuse in their childhood. These adult children would visit their parents whenever they have spare time. Those who don’t receive the education about filial piety know how to fulfill the obligation of being a child. Compared with them, the shocking fact that many aged parents are left in nursing homes by their children who only give them enough money without visiting them makes me sad. I don’t believe that so many parents abuse their children or that they don’t take care of their children well enough that they have to face such a depressing reality. It is unacceptable for me since we exist and live in the world because of our parents. For most of us, our parents excel their best to look after us and nurture us. They raise us since birth, help us, do things they would not like to do, spend countless amounts of money on us and mold us into the fine people we are today. Why don’t we take care of them? It is obvious that we have the responsibility to do so just like how parents have the responsibility to raise us.

By and large, I trust every adult child should take care of his or her elderly parents due to filial piety, conscience and responsibility.
Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the heated debate about whether deschooling is a better choice over formal school education.

With a significant growth rate of seven to fifteen percent per year, deschooling is becoming more prevalent nowadays. Deschooling law, also dubbed homeschooling law, however, is vary from state to state. In some cities, such as Hong Kong, homeschooling contravenes the compulsory education law. In my opinion, deschooling is a better option over formal school education and it goes as follow.

First and foremost, deschooling can enjoy a flexible curriculum. Homeschooled students have the choice to study whatever they like, whenever they prefer and even wherever they want. It does not mean that they do not have to learn. Instead, a less tedious, susceptible but more relaxing free learning atmosphere can be built. With the flexible time management and syllabus, students can put focus on their weakness or their favourite subject. Hence, learning will be more effective.

Nevertheless, tutors of homeschooling can take advantages of all community resources. Community resources such as the district library, hospital, college, to name but a few, are desirable places for learning. Making good use of these facilities can not only help homeschooled students broaden their horizons, but also can they spend days in the real world, interacting with those of different age ranges, cultures and economic levels. Through these interactions, they learn to respect others, form friendships, resolve conflicts and collaborate with others.

Besides, homeschooling can achieve closer family relationships. Through homeschooling, parents can become a role of mentor acting as the facilitator and assistant in lieu of merely a food or accommodation provider. Homeschooling helps all family members foster loving ties. Rebellious and destructive behaviour of adolescents often begins to diminish soon after homeschooling begins.

As of the aforementioned, barrage of advantages of deschooling outweigh the advantages of conventional school education. Therefore, I believe that
homeschooling is a better choice than formal school education. I earnestly hope that our Hong Kong government can give the green light to homeschooling. With students being the future social pillars, this suggestion should not be left on deaf ears.

Yours faithfully,
Martin Wong
Martin Wong
Dear Editor,

Ms. W. S. Lam, a primary school teacher, has lately been put under the spotlight owing to her notorious behaviour of speaking foul language overtly. This incident not only raised much furor in society, but also triggered contentious debates among various stakeholders. Some go along with the teacher, advocating the freedom of expression, whereas others condemn her for setting a misleading image for easily- swayed teenagers. Indeed, under the Basic Law, we are all guaranteed to express ourselves freely. Yet, regarding that speaking foul language itself is a crude and disrespectful act, under no circumstances should anyone do it publicly with a view to insulting or putting others down.

Obviously, it is teachers’ responsibility to reinforce students’ good behaviour and instill the correct values into them. Therefore, it is reasonable that parents or other sectors put great emphasis on their own conduct. For example, teachers have to declare that they have not committed any sexual offences. The aim is patent – to exert the greatest protection on pliable students. We want teachers who are not only conscientious or level-headed, but also inculcate a high moral standard into the younger generation. Lamentably, Ms. Lam failed to play her role effectively and disappointed the public with her defiant attitude and hotheaded character shown in the heated YouTube video clip. Though some may claim that she was not on duty, so her behaviour should not be confined. I believe that we all want teachers to be consistent, taking heed of their words and actions irrespective of time and place. Otherwise, they cannot convincingly nurture the next generation to be righteous people. In short, I show a complete disapproval of Ms. Lam’s irrational act and hope that she can learn some lessons from this event.

Even though I was particularly disappointed by the teacher, the subsequent actions performed by multifarious parties are too caustic. Ms. Lam did not do something which is nefarious or remarkably harmful to society, but people around did not cease pointing the finger at her. Her personal information was revealed without her nod. She was sent threatening letters and some even intimidated her school to lay her off. Problems are getting out of hand and she is psychologically tormented. Yet, does she really deserve such treatment or are people just trying to
vent their discontent on the innocent woman?

The government should not avert itself from worsening the situation either. It is so rare a case that the Chief Executive would step into a trivial conflict and ludicrously ask the Education Bureau and the corresponding school to submit reports. This raises concern on whether the government is attempting to infringe on the education sector or even subtly take over it for politicalization, indoctrinating students with misleading information.

Alarming signs of disharmony are shown in this event as well. Hong Kong always deems itself as a pluralistic city which opens to all opinions. Idealistically, different parties are bound to voice their needs. Yet, recent conflicts aroused between various stakeholders no longer show mutual respect, but they use radical means such as yelling or hitting instead. For instance, the backdrop of the Ms. Lam's incident was set by the conflict between Falun Gong and Hong Kong Youth Care Association Limited (HKYCA Ltd). The latter was alleged to have hit the former with abominable intention. Therefore, while we are embracing the precious freedom of assembly and expression in Hong Kong, bear in mind that respect and rationality are the cornerstones of them. Furthermore, police-citizen conflicts have been exacerbated these last few years and the situation deserves our grave concern. Ever since the Li Keqiang’s incident took place in University of Hong Kong, the public has suspected that the police force has abused its power during assemblies. Once again this time, Ms. Lam claimed that her anger towards the police was due to its bias to the HKYCA Ltd. The police force is no longer a legitimate party to the majority of citizens.

To wrap it up, although the public’s reactions may have made a mountain out of a molehill, this incident undoubtedly evokes a few meaningful and important questions that deserve our deep thought.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Wong