Oasis

2010

PUI CHING MIDDLE SCHOOL
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

20 November 2009
Words from the Editors

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.

November, 2009
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THE PAINTER WHO PAINTS 2/3

a fable in five scenes
CHARACTERS

Painter 1
Painter 2
Painter 3
Chief Angel
Senior Angel
Junior Angel
Apprentice Angel
Tutor
FOR THE ONE WHO GRANTS SLEEP TO ME
SO THAT I MAY DREAM TOO

“… and after the fire came a gentle whisper …”
1 Kings 19:12

“It’s the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting.”
The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho
SCENE 1

[a plant rests on a stand at the front stage. Three painters stand behind it, all looking at the plant]
[with a brush in their hands, the three painters hold their thumbs in mid-air, moving slightly, in absolute silence and with utmost concentration, prepare to work on their sketches. All frowning and mumbling something]

Painter 2: [complains] No, no, no, this isn’t right!
Painter 3: [annoyed] The mood is totally wrong! I’m sick of the light, the colours and the proportions are all wrong, all wrong, everything is wrong, totally wrong!
Painter 1: [patient and gentle] Come here, try this. [and she tilts her pen to one side, waves it for a few times]
Painter 2: Oh, yeah, yeah, it feels ... better now, yeah, that’s it, that’s it! [gets gradually excited, quickly moves to his canvas and starts sketching]

[the three painters all start working on their canvases. Two of them start to chitchat as they paint]

Painter 3: [tries to talk to painter 1, receiving no response] Every time it’s you who gets the right perspective, the right mood.
Painter 2: [interrupts] She’s always talented, you know, everybody is saying that she’s the most talented painter in our class.
Painter 3: Yes, there’s no doubt about it.

[they take a glimpse of painter 1 and, seeing no response, resume their painting and chitchat]

Painter 2: You know, buddies, every time when I stand in front of this canvas and lay my hand on it, I have a strange feeling. What should I say? [hesitates and then lets out a cold laugh] I just don’t know what I’m doing.
Painter 3: Sometimes I feel the same too.
Painter 2: You know, every time I start, I have no idea what I’m going to paint, I feel like I’m an idiot standing with an empty head.
Painter 3: That’s right, [sighs] It’s such a mechanical task, I feel like a machine, a robot, doing this ... [shrugs] I don’t know ... meaningless painting ...
Painter 2: [jokingly] Ha, why don’t you quit then? You can have a thousand other
things to do besides painting.

Painter 3: [rebuts] Then, why don’t you quit, man?

Painter 2: [firmly] Well, why should I quit? Painting brings me a future. You know, these paintings can sell big money. [fantasizes] Who knows? Maybe one day my painting can sell ... millions of dollars, and I’ll be the richest man on earth, anything can happen!

Painter 3: [ironic] Yeah, maybe, one day. And maybe the next second you’ll ... [tries to scare] ... die. The richest man on earth? “Maybe”, what a tricky word!

Painter 2: What’s the matter with you?

Painter 3: Huh, you may get rich, in other words, you may get poor, never be too hopeful if you are a painter. Do you know Vincent Van Gogh? [mockingly] He died hungry!

Painter 2: [tries to defend] Yeah, you may be right, but you may be wrong, too. Maybe I’m luckier than Van Gogh. Let’s wait and see. [turns to painter 1]

So, hey, what about you, girl? [back to painter 3] This girl never talks while she paints. Hey! [gestures at painter 1]

Painter 1: [awakes from work] Sorry, I was focusing, I didn’t hear you.

Painter 3: Hey, I mean, why do you paint? [points at painter 2] This guy paints for big money, and you?

Painter 1: [innocent and frank] Me? I don’t know. I just want to paint. Somehow, I want to paint. It was always my childhood dream.

Painter 3: [skeptical] Are you kidding? Dream? You know, you are being humorous today.

Painter 2: [sarcastic] Oh, girl, thank you for the humour, but it’s a very poor joke. You know, I have never heard of the word in my whole life.

Painter 1: [innocent] You mean the word, dream? Well, I mean it, being a painter is always my dream. I feel like it’s an inborn gift!

Painter 2: [impatient] Come off it, that’s enough. Yeah, dream, keep dreaming, you dreamer. [teasingly] You dream your big dream and I’ll eat my ice-cream, huh!

Painter 3: Don’t you remember She’s an expert in dreaming?

Painter 2: Ah, yeah, especially in daytime. she’s really an expert in day dreaming.

[joins in to mock and suddenly turns to see] Hey look, here we go again!

Painter 3: Yeah, speak of the dreamer and the dreamer comes!

[mysteriously dreamy background music]

[painter 1 starts sleepwalking. She sleepwalks around the stage, gradually moving in dramatic manners, as if dancing, while the other two painters can’t help gasping in
excitement, but are amused at the same time, with grimaces on their faces, they try to play tricks on painter 1, parody her steps, and finally wake her up from her sleepwalk]

Painter 1: [awakes from sleepwalk, barely conscious] Oh, what happened? My head feels terrible. [hands cupped over head]
Painter 3: Haha! The “magic moment” again!
Painter 2: What did you dream about this time?
Painter 3: [curious] The paper planes again?
Painter 1: [thinking hard, splitting headache continues] Ah … yeah, I saw a lot of paper planes, the paper planes again. The paper planes keep flying before my eyes … oh my head … [massages her temples].
Painter 2: Why do you keep having the same dream over and over again?
Painter 1: [still aches] I have no idea, but that just happens. Oh, the pain is killing me …
Painter 3: [teasingly] Perhaps you should see a doctor; you may have some serious mental problems.
Painter 2: [scares] Yeah, brain cancer!
Painter 3: Come on, don’t scare her!
Painter 1: [becomes more conscious] But, um, I believe the dream must mean something.
Painter 3: [interrogative tone] So what is it?
Painter 1: I don’t know, but …
Painter 2: [impatient] Stop it, I’m not interested in your dream.
Painter 1: [refuses to stop the dialogue] Will it be that …
Painter 3: I’m not listening.
Painter 1: [keeps going] Come on, what do you think the paper planes mean … What if …
Painter 2: [indignant, threatens] Stop it, or I’ll cut you tongue out and fly it like a paper plane.

[the three painters keep talking while light dims gradually]
SCENE 2

[a setting of a meeting]
[angels with four distinct voices]

Chief Angel: Please be seated. [claps hands for a few times] OK, everybody, do you know why we are here today?

Senior Angel: It seems that something serious is going on here.

Chief Angel: Bingo!

App. Angel: [confused] So, do you mean ... we are having a ... kind of a meeting here?

Junior Angel: Of course, or do you think we are just doing something silly ... like a “drama” here? [gestures the quotation marks]

Senior Angel: Then come on, let’s start the meeting.

App. Angel: [lost] Where shall we start from? What is the agenda?

Chief Angel: Well, let’s look at some pictures first.

Junior Angel: Ha, what a way to get started!

Chief Angel: I’m going to show you a few portraits. Look at these guys, and find out what is common between them.

Junior Angel: [disappointed, in a bored tone] How interesting ... Ha ... Ha ...  

Chief Angel: [claps hands twice] Here is the first picture. 

Senior Angel: Who is this guy?

Junior Angel: I know, I know, it’s the Santa Claus!

Chief Angel: [gives a light punch on Junior Angel’s head] We are still in February, not December yet. Plus, Santa Claus always wears a red hat, and he never smokes. This gentleman here, actually, is Mr. Sigmund Freud.

App./Jun. Angel: [make fun of the name] John Chow Chow Chow, what a funny name!

Chief Angel: [expert-like tone] He wrote a classic book about dreams.

App./Jun. Angel: So what?

Chief Angel: This book ... um ... [wants to tell more but hesitates because of not being able to tell more, thus embarrassed] anyway, you won’t understand ... no one ever understands.

Senior Angel: Who’s next? [stretches limbs and yawns loudly]

Chief Angel: Here is the second picture. [claps hands twice]

Junior Angel: [marvels, almost jumps from chair] This is something! It’s a Chinese!

App. Angel: So, who is he?

Chief Angel: You’re right, he is a Chinese, but he’s got an English name. His name is [exaggerates] ... John Chow.

App./Jun. Angel: [make fun of the name] John Chow Chow Chow, what a funny name!
Senior Angel: [righteously] Hey, don’t be rude. So, what’s special about Mr. [hesitates] John Chow?

Chief Angel: Well the legend goes like this: [in a story-telling tone] one night, he had a dream, an ordinary dream, he dreamed of a butterfly; but he asked a very extraordinary question: [in a pretentious tone] Did I dream of the butterfly or did the butterfly dream of me?

Junior Angel: [obviously bored] What a funny question …

App. Angel: [confused] Did he get the answer at last?

Chief Angel: No, he didn’t. [seriously] But don’t you think that it was really an extraordinary question?

Senior Angel: [in disdain] Who cares? It’s only a silly question, it doesn’t make any sense to me! [acts in a serious manner] Am I speaking the words or are the words speaking me? Am I breathing the air or is the air breathing me? Huh?

Chief Angel: [shakes his head] Anyway, let’s move on to the next picture. [claps hands twice] The next guy is also called John.

Senior Angel: [screams in a frenzied tone] It’s John Lennon! He’s my all-time favourite singer!

Junior Angel: Me too! I love the song “Imagine” so much, it means so much to me! [can’t wait to stand up, clear throat and sing] [totally engaged, but in a terrible voice, sings] “You may say I’m a dreamer / But I’m not the only one/ I hope someday you will join us / And the world will be as one” [vibrato continues dramatically]

Senior Angel: [a few cold claps of hands] Bravo, bravo … [impatient] Can we go to the last picture and finish the meeting quickly?

Chief Angel: OK. [claps hands twice] This is Martin Luther King Junior.

App. Angel: Did he sing also? He doesn’t look like a rock star to me! [shakes head disappointingly]

Chief Angel: Well, he wasn’t a rock star. He’s not good at singing, but he could speak brilliantly.

Senior Angel: Oh, yeah … he said … um … um … um … [thinks hard, trying to recall the line]

[the clip plays, with Dr. King saying the line “I have a dream”]

Junior Angel: Did he say, “I have a gym”? Did he mean weight lifting, working on the dumb-bells, those kinds of things? [motions meanwhile]

Senior Angel: Not a gym, but a DREAM! Read after me, I have a dream!

App./Jun. Angel: [parodies] I have a dream!
Senior Angel: Yeah, what a statement! That’s really unforgettable.

Chief Angel: That’s remarkable, isn’t it? Ok, [claps hands twice] so, everybody, have you noticed any similarity between these people?

Junior Angel: They are all males?

Chief Angel: Um, yes, but …

Senior Angel: They are all dead?

Chief Angel: Well, yes, but …

App. Angel: So, what is it? Just tell us!

Chief Angel: What they have in common is that they are all interested in one word.

Senior Angel: [all blink their eyes hard] Word? What word?

Chief Angel: [mysteriously] Dream, they are all interested in the word, [exaggerates] d-r-e-a-m, dream.

Junior Angel: [confused] So, what’s the point? I don’t get your point …

Chief Angel: The point is, [mysteriously, slowly] dream.

Senior Angel: Well, I’m sorry, but I mean what’s the point? What’s wrong with the word, “dream”?

Chief Angel: [suddenly loudly] Don’t you remember who we are?

App./Jun. Angel: Well, [hesitates, embarrassed] we are the angels!

Chief Angel: Yes, [emphatically] we are the angels, and our job is to bring dreams to people. [worriedly] But the point is, people are now forgetting the word, dream. They don’t mention it, they don’t talk about it! They don’t even think about it!

Senior Angel: [anxious] Well … what are we supposed to do then?

Chief Angel: [slowly, claiming every word] Bring-them-back-their-dreams!

App./Jun. Angel: [eager to know] How?

Chief Angel: I’ll show you how!

[light dims]
SCENE 3

[spotlight. in the studio with a few canvases, painter 1 sleepwalks on stage alone]
[spotlight out. tutor enters with an envelop in hand, shocked and irritated by the sight, tutor gets closer and closer to painter, hits her head with the envelop in order to wake her up from her sleepwalking]

Tutor: [indignant] What’s wrong with you? It’s early in the morning and you are [incomprehensible] ... what were you doing, sleeping? Dancing? Or were you possessed by some devil? Gosh, you are here to paint, aren’t you?
Painter 1: [head in hands] What happened ... I’m sorry ... my head feels terrible ...

[the other two painters dash in, try to help her out]

Painter 3: Sorry, miss, um ... [tries hard to explain away] this is the way she ... looks for ideas for her paintings! Yeah, her poor slightly unpleasant but harmless habit ...actually quite lovely, right?
Painter 2: [tries to help out] Yeah, you know, artist ... they have a special way of doing things, you know, strange people ... “artist” ... [gestures the quotation marks, making a grimace]
Tutor: [calms down] OK, anyway. [clears her throat, seriously] As everybody is here, I think it’s the perfect moment to make this announcement.
Painter 2: Announcement? Are you ... [giggles] ... going to get married? I can’t believe that!
Painter 3: [suddenly recalls] Oh, no! I mean, yes, it’s today! The result of the competition!
Tutor: Yes, it’s about the competition. One of you are going to be invited to the Annual International Exhibition, which is the greatest honour that I know for painters all over the world. You know, Damien Hirst, Jackson Pollock, Edward Hopper, Salvador Dali, you name it!
Painter 2: Wow, I wish I could be there; it’s definitely the place where I’m going to make big money with my paintings.
Painter 3: Yeah, maybe!
Tutor: And the name of the winner is right here in my hand, in this envelop.

[everybody nervous, waiting earnestly for the result, breathing heavily, biting nails, trembling and hiding face in hands]
Painter 1: [desperate to know] Who ... Who’s the winner?
Tutor: And the person who wins the ticket to the exhibition is ... [swings her finger, tries to create the suspense] ... the winner is ... you! [points at painter 2] Congratulations!
Painter 2: Me? I can’t believe it! It’s me! Mama mia! I’ve made it!

[in a hysteric state, kneels down and stands up again, shaking hands with the other three people, almost crying, while the other two painters obviously dejected and jealous]

Painter 2: [still excited, conceited] I always know that I would make it some day! I told you, my paintings are going to sell big money, you didn’t believe me, and you see it right before you eyes today!
Painter 3: [bitterly] Well ... congratulations ...
Painter 2: [calms down, proudly] Ok, everybody, I’m in a rush now, I’m a busy person now, I’ve to pack up my belongings and prepare for my exhibition now, prepare to become a millionaire painter now! See you then. [points at the others’ paintings, arrogant] Well, not bad, keep painting!

[painter 2 hops away in ecstasy; tutor pats lightly on the other two painters’ shoulders and leaves]
[painter 1 has been silent for a long while, pondering over something]

Painter 3: You know, I always thought that you would be the one who would win; everyone agrees that you are the most talented painter among us.

[painter 1 keeps silent]

Painter 3: [comforting] Come on, you’re the best, cheer up!

[painter 1 keeps silent]

Painter 3: [letting out a sigh of relief] Anyway, that’s life. Are you ok?
Painter 1: [after a while, lowly] I’m fine. I just want to be alone.
Painter 3: Ok, buddy, take care. Remember, you’re the best! [leaves]

[in a contemplative mood, painter 1 slowly heads back to her canvas, tries to start painting, thumb in mid-air, swings her brush a few times, then suddenly dumps it on the ground and stamps on it in fury]
Painter 1: [as if shouting at the canvas and the brush] Why? Why is that? Why am I always the loser? Talented? [ironic] Huh, perhaps a talented loser! Is that all a joke? [starts to weaken and self-pity] It’s not a good joke, it’s a very bad joke, I don’t like bad jokes, perhaps I’m the joke, perhaps my dream is just a terrible joke ... I shouldn’t be a painter. I shouldn’t paint. [bends down gradually and sits on ground with knees drawn to head, falls asleep]

[light dims]
SCENE 4

[painter 1 sits on ground, same position, sleeping]
[painter 1 wakes up from sleep]
[a colour paper plane flies across stage]
[Senior Angel enters with a handful of strings attached to colourful balloons, happily gazing at the balloons]
[light background music]

Painter 1: Excuse me, who are you? I’ve never seen you before.

[no response from Senior Angel]

Painter 1: [a bit louder] Hey, Where are you from? The balloons are so beautiful. Where did you get them? Are you selling them?

[Apprentice Angel & Junior Angel enter with a bunch of colourful flowers from the other side, enjoying the fragrance of the flowers]

Painter 1: Oh, hey, who are you? What are you doing here?

[no response from Apprentice Angel & Junior Angel]

Painter 1: [a bit louder] Hey, the flowers are lovely. Can I have one? How much are they?

[None of the angels seem to hear painter 1. They dance with the balloons and flowers. Painter 1 wants to get closer. They keep dancing gracefully and suddenly Senior Angel pricks a balloon with a pin and it bursts]

Painter 1: [astonished] Hey, what are you doing?

[Senior Angel bursts another balloon, gracefully]

Painter 1: What a horrible thing to do to the balloons!

[Both Apprentice Angel & Junior Angel pick a flower from the bouquet and dump it on the ground and stamp on it gracefully]
Painter 1: Hey, and you, what are you doing to the flowers?

[Apprentice Angel & Junior Angel stamp on another flower, gracefully]

Painter 1: Hey, stop, that’s horrible, stop it, I said stop it, please, stop it, please ...

[meanwhile, the angels keep doing horrible things to the balloons and flowers, gracefully. When the balloons and flowers are all gone, they leave]

Painter 1: They must be out of their minds! [painter kneels down beside the debris of the balloons and flowers, in a sympathetic tone, as if mourning the loss]

How can they be so cruel to these beautiful things? Oh, poor lovely things ...

[suddenly, a paper plane flies across stage and painter notices it with wonder. Another paper planes flies across stage again. Chief Angel enters stage]

Painter 1: Hey, can you see that paper plane?

[no response from Chief Angel]

Painter 1: [shouts] Hey, you! I’m talking to you!

Chief Angel: [gently] What? Paper plane?

Painter 1: Here is another one!

Chief Angel: [looks around] What? What do you mean? I don’t see anything!

Painter 1: [speaks to the audience] Hey, can you see that?

Chief Angel: [speaks to the audience] Can you see that? No! Nobody sees anything!

Painter 1: [sighs, but persists] Ok, ok, I’m not arguing with you. But ... can I ask a question?

Chief Angel: Well, no problem.

Painter 1: [careful with her words] So, let’s assume, let’s just assume, [slowly and cautiously] that IF I really saw some paper planes fly right before my eyes, what would that mean? [meanwhile, paper planes keep flying around them]

Chief Angel: [excited] Wow, that would mean a whole lot of things!

Painter 1: [curious] So what is it?

Chief Angel: Do you want to know?
Painter 1: Yes!
Chief Angel: Really?
Painter 1: Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! [passionately]
Chief Angel: Now, suppose you REALLY saw paper planes fly right before your eyes, in that case, that would mean …
Painter 1: What is it?
Chief Angel: I’ll tell you, come, come closer … [uses his finger to signal painter 1 to come closer, then whispers into painter 1’s ear] …
Painter 1: [puzzled] I beg your pardon?
Chief Angel: Come here [signals painter 1 to come close, then again, whispers into her ear] …
Painter 1: [confused and irritated] What? Sorry, I couldn’t hear you! Do you mind speaking a bit louder?
Chief Angel: [in a calm, soothing voice] Really? Well, listen carefully, but do not just listen with your ear, listen carefully with your heart.
Painter 1: Listen with my heart?
Chief Angel: Yes, with all your heart. [hesitates] Do you understand?
Painter 1: [ponders over that for a few seconds] um.
Chief Angel: [doubtful] Do you really understand?
Painter 1: [firmly] Yes.
Chief Angel: Then, let’s try again. [signals painter 1 to come closer and chief angel whispers again in painter 1’s ear] …

[light dims]
SCENE 5

[painter 1 sits on ground, sleeping]
[enters painter 3]

Painter 3: [surprised to see painter 1] Why are you still here?
Painter 1: [rubs her eyes] I think I've fallen asleep again ...
Painter 3: Really? Did you spend your night here sleeping ... from yesterday morning?
Painter 1: I think so ...[shocked] What? From YESTERDAY morning?
Painter 3: Exactly, you must have been sleeping here for 27 hours non-stop.
Painter 1: What? 27 hours? I’ve been sleeping for 27 hours?
Painter 3: Yes, it’s probably a new world record. So, did you dream again, dreamer?
Painter 1: [lowers her head and tries to recall] Well, yes ...
Painter 3: Paper planes again?
Painter 1: Yes, and something more ... [rubs her temples]

[enters painter 2]

Painter 2: [depressed tone] Hello, everybody, I’m back ...
Painter 1: [surprised] Why do you come back so soon?
Painter 3: Have you made enough money for your retirement?
Painter 1: And are you coming back just to say goodbye?
Painter 2: [embarrassed] Well, um, no. But, um ... the exhibition wasn’t that fun ...
you know those painters in the exhibition were so shallow ... tasteless ...
boring ...
Painter 1: What do you mean?
Painter 3: So did you sell any of your paintings?
Painter 2: Well, um ...
Painter 3: [interrupts] Ok, ok, let me guess, one million dollars?
Painter 2: No ...
Painter 3: Ten million dollars? [rubs hands]
Painter 2: No.
Painter 3: Are you kidding me? A hundred million dollars?
Painter 2: No. [quietly] None.
Painter 3: [to painter 1] What did he say?
Painter 1: What did you say?
Painter 2: None.
Painter 1: None?
Painter 2: None.
Painter 3: [bursts into laughter] Hohoho ... so you didn’t sell any painting! Are you serious? [teasingly] Oh, our millionaire painter, next time, maybe!
Painter 2: They had no taste in art ... and ... they ... they couldn’t find a way to appreciate my paintings ... and ...
Painter 1: That’s all right. It’s fine, we understand that. Art can be subjective.
Painter 2: [starts to weaken, depressed] And really, this time, I think I should give up painting ...
Painter 1: Come on. Cheer up!
Painter 2: Maybe I’ll never become a millionaire being a painter ...
Painter 1: Well, painting is not just for money. It’s much more than money.
Painter 2: [dejected] I think I should quit painting ...
Painter 1: Even if no one buys your paintings, you need not give up. No one can buy your dream from you.
Painter 1: [innocent with pure faith] Yes, dream. No matter how you call it: a purpose, a wish, a hope, a vision, an ideal, a desire, a calling, a meaning, a mission, a fantasy, a faith, a dream, whatever, listen to it, listen to its gentle whisper, listen with your heart, and then, let it grow! Don’t let it die out, let it grow!
Painter 3: Let it grow?
Painter 1: Yes, some people dream to be a dancer, some dream to be a doctor, some dream to be a poet, and you started to be painter, because you wanted to be a painter when you were still a kid. It was your childhood dream, wasn’t it?
Painter 2: [scratches his head] Well ...
Painter 1: Come on, try to think back ...
Painter 2: Well ... yes, you’re right ...when I was seven, my mum bought me my first brush. [motions his brush meanwhile] I painted on the wall, it was such a wonderful feeling, and I ... I wanted to be a painter ever since that time.
Painter 1: That’s it! So, let that childhood dream grow, let it grow ... like a tree.
Painter 2: Like a tree? Like the tree on your canvas? [points at her canvas]
Painter 1: [takes a glance at her canvas] Ah, yes.
Painter 3: You have been working on this painting for a long time, what is it exactly? Show us! [turns the canvas around so that the painting is shown to the audience]
Painter 3: [shocked to realize what’s on the canvas] How ... special ...
Painter 2: [shocked to realize what’s on the canvas] How ... strange ...
Painter 3: um … people don’t usually paint a tree in that way …
Painter 2: Well, there’s plenty of space for the painting, why did you push everything towards the top?
Painter 3: Yeah … yeah … why is it empty down there at the bottom?
Painter 2: It seems somehow hollow, absolutely blank.
Painter 1: [amused] You said it’s empty down there? It’s not empty! It’s just that you can’t see it!
Painter 3: See it? See what? What is there?
Painter 1: The root of the tree is there! You may not see it, but the root is there, always there.
Painter 2: But, why do you leave it all empty there?
Painter 3: [bewildered] So, why don’t you just paint that?
Painter 1: Why should I? I have to remind myself that what cannot be seen is always more important. To us, the root of the tree may be invisible, but the tree cannot live without this invisible part.
Painter 2: [pondering] the tree … the root …
Painter 3: [pondering] visible … invisible …
Painter 2: [enlightened] I see! It sounds like our life. [contemplatively, weighing with his hands] Our dream is the invisible part, and …
Painter 1: [happy and interrupts] Yes, I think you’ve got it!
Painter 2: [excited] Yeah, I think I’ve got it! Yes, dream. The word sounded like a joke to me yesterday, but today, I realize what a lovely word it is!

[painter 1 pats painter 2 on the shoulder]

Painter 3: Yeah. Hey, by the way, how do you know all this? I mean, all these things about dreams?
Painter 1: [chuckles] Me? I don’t know. Maybe … um … come on [whispers into painter 3’s ear] …

[light dims]
[paper planes fly across stage, then towards the audience]
[curtain]
Myself
Hui Tsz Ho 1A

Dear Chris,

How are you, Chris? Welcome to our school. How do you feel in these few days? Nice to meet you!

My name is Tsz Ho. I am 12 years old. I am a Form 1 student. I like reading magazines and listening to music, especially 1930 – 1980’s. I want to be a fashion designer in the future because I like watching fashion shows on YouTube. Some of the collections and fabrics are beautiful and glamorous. What are your hobbies and the job you want to do? I am curious about that!

There are four members in my family. They are my father, mother, my younger sister and me. My sister is studying in PCPS. My father likes Maths and my mother likes to chat with her friends. Also, she loves reading books about Daoism. How about your family?

I like my class because my classmates are close to one another. My favorite subject is Computer because I can learn knowledge about modern technologies. However, I don’t like two subjects, they are Maths and Sport. What subjects do you like?

Anyway, I hope you feel good about your life in HK and at school. Send my love to the rest of your family and write soon!

Lots of love,
Tsz Ho
I went to Sunshine Zoo with my parents and my little brother last weekend. It was an exciting day. Early in the morning, we set off to the Sunshine Zoo by bus. That day was a sunny day. When we arrived there, there were lots of people, all of them were lining up at the entrance to buy the tickets. We felt annoyed and bored. We waited for one hour then we got four tickets.

When we entered the zoo, we saw a lion cage. The lions were fierce and scary. One of them had a scar on its face. Then we visited the aquarium and took lots of photos with the sea creatures. After that, we saw the pandas, they were cute and yet they were so lazy. Finally, we went to the Monkey Land to visit the monkeys. The monkeys looked upset, I thought it’s because they didn’t have enough space in the tiny cage. When I discovered the door of the cage was open, I realized they would come out. Suddenly, a monkey ran out of the cage and snatched my brother’s lollipop. My little brother cried loudly. Mum and I tried to comfort him, then, some staff ran after the monkey.

At last, the staff caught the monkey and put it back in a cage. They quickly apologized to Mum and Dad. The staff said they would give the monkeys a better place. However, my little brother was still crying, so I bought him an ice-cream and he smiled again!
An Unforgettable Jump
Isaac Tsui 1A

Three days ago, I arrived in the USA. I had hamburgers and French Fries for every meal and even went to see a circus. However, today I would do the thing I was truly looking forward to – bungee jumping.

We arrived at a steel bridge built what seemed to be miles above a raging river. It was almost two hundred metres high, I thought to myself, as if that piece of information could help me with my fear of heights. As I checked that the strap was tight enough, I peered over the edge of the bridge. My legs were trembling like mad but nobody seemed to notice, which was a pity. I could’ve done with someone talking me out of this right then. I took a deep breath and tried to calm down, but it was hard to stay calm when you were about to make a 200-metre jump. I shifted a bit forward, tripped, and fell face first into the impending doom.

“Whose stupid idea was this?” I asked myself. “Yours,” said a small voice in the back of my head. True enough, I was the one who had persuaded my parents to let me bungee jump in the first place. Suddenly, the strap tightened abruptly and I had reached the bottom! Relief washed over me at last. My feet were dangling just a few feet from the water, as my coach hauled me back up.

Apart from feeling like I had cracked some of my ribs, bungee jumping was actually quite fun. But I guess I won’t be trying it again in a short while.
A Letter to a New Friend
Michael Lam  1B

16 September 2009

Dear Chris,

How are you? I am Michael Lam. I am twelve years old. My birthday is 26th December. I live in Hong Kong. My favourite things are my computer and my mobile phone. I like playing with my cat all the time.

There are four members in my family. They are my parents, my sister, and me. My mum works in a big salon and my dad is a car dealer. My dad likes fishing. He catches lots of fish every time he goes fishing. My sister is extremely lazy.

Where do you study? I study in Pui Ching Middle School. I am in class 1B. I like my class because my classmates are nice and helpful. My favourite subject is Science because it is fun to discover new things. I have joined the table tennis team at school. We practise playing table tennis once a week.

I’d like to know more about your hobbies, your family and your school life. Please write to me soon.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards,
Michael
A Day in Sunshine Zoo
Michael Lam  1B

Last weekend, I went to Sunshine Zoo with my parents and my brother. We would like to watch the animals there. When we arrived at the zoo, we saw long queues of people waiting at the main entrance. We were all very tired and annoyed. Finally, we entered the zoo after we had waited for 25 minutes.

After we had entered the zoo, we went to the “Panda’s Garden”. However, there were too many people so we decided to watch the monkeys first. The monkeys were crammed in a tiny cage so there was not enough room for them to move. Those monkeys looked bored and sad. We were also bored and disappointed as we expected to see some energetic monkeys play tricks there.

A moment later, we discovered that the cage door was open and a monkey ran out and he grabbed my brother’s lollipop. My brother was so scared that he screamed and burst out crying. My mother tried to comfort him immediately and my father asked the zookeeper for help.

At last, the staff of the zoo caught the monkey and put it in another cage. My brother was still very frightened and was crying so I decided to buy him an ice-cream. When he saw the ice-cream, his smile appeared again and stopped crying. Then, we continued our visit in the zoo.
Dear Joey,

I received your letter yesterday and I couldn’t sleep well last night, as I knew that you were unhappy. I am writing this letter to encourage you. In fact, it is not easy to adapt to a new environment. Most S.1 students take months to get used to the new challenges.

In your letter, you said that you would like to improve your English. Do you remember our class teacher Miss Wong, who told us ‘Practice makes perfect’? You can spend an hour reading English books every day. It will help you improve your writing skills. Besides, try to read aloud any passages to your parents when they have time to listen. It will help you to be more confident in speaking!

Do you remember our schoolmate Peter? He is studying in my class. In the beginning of the school year, he did not pay attention during lessons so he was asked to sit alone. Then, Peter became more attentive. What about if you ask for your teacher’s permission to let you sit alone? I think it is a good way to help you stop talking during lessons.

In fact, when you are well-behaved, your teachers and classmates will have a good impression on you. I know you are very good at drawing. Perhaps you can offer to help to decorate the notice boards in the classroom. I am sure your classmates will find that you are a trustworthy, helpful person.

Recently, I have been very busy practicing the violin because I have joined the school orchestra and we will have a performance with schools from Macau and Guangzhou to celebrate Pui Ching’s 120th anniversary in November. Do you have time to come? Call me whenever you like.

Best wishes,
Leslie
Cinderella was a poor girl who worked in the Fong’s family. In the Fong’s family, there are four sisters and one brother. Her sisters hated Cinderella very much but her brother loved her dearly and was very kind.

One day, Cinderella’s sisters asked her to do housework but her brother helped her do all the chores secretly. On the next day, Cinderella heard that there would be a party for the prince. She wanted to attend the party but her sisters didn’t allow her to do so. After that, Cinderella saw her old friend, Snow White, so she asked for her help. However, Snow White was busy, so she couldn’t help her.

On the next day, Cinderella saw a wolf on the street. It looked so tired and cold. She helped the wolf and gave him some soup. Suddenly, the wolf changed into a tiger and asked Cinderella, “Why did you help me?” She said, “Because you look so hungry.” “I can make your dream come true, but you need to give me your brother for my dinner,” said the tiger.

Cinderella thought for a moment and said, “I don’t want any dream, I just want my brother.” Then the tiger asked, “Don’t you want to become a princess?” She answered, “No, I just want to be my brother’s sister.” At this moment, her brother heard everything they had said. He came out and hugged Cinderella and said, “I am the prince, I want you to be my wife.” So, they got married and lived in a big castle.

How about the wolf? He was a maid working in the castle.
Brave Tom
Winky Lee     1C

One day, when Betty was crossing the road, she saw a poor, pathetic-looking dog. Betty sympathized with the dog, so she wanted to take it home. She hugged it up and the dog didn't bark because it felt very safe and comfortable.

On her way home, Betty thought of a name for the dog. At last, she called it Tom.

On Sunday, Betty was playing happily with Tom in the garden when suddenly Tom hit a ball very hard and the ball flew far away from them. Betty wanted to catch the ball and a car was speeding near. Tom barked loudly. Betty’s attention was caught by Tom and then she noticed that the car was approaching. She ran away quickly, so she wasn't hit by the car. Tom had saved her life. Later, she prepared a big meal for Tom so as to thank it for saving her.

Two years later, Betty was walking with Tom. She was preoccupied with the thought of buying Tom a present. Therefore, she wasn’t aware of a car coming when she was crossing the road. Tom realized the danger so it barked at Betty, yet she didn’t respond. In order to save Betty, Tom rushed towards Betty at great speed and pushed Betty away before the car could hit her.

Tom saved Betty once again, but Tom died. Betty was very sad, but she would remember Tom forever.
Once upon a time, there was a young boy named John. He lived with his grandma and grandpa. He had a pet. It was a cat named Hello Kitty. John’s grandma and grandpa worked in a farm. The farm had many animals. So many fierce animals like foxes, tigers, wolves and the most powerful animals, lions, would eat the other small animals in the farm. Sometimes, the foxes, tigers and wolves would also be eaten by the lions. The lions soon became stronger day by day.

One night, one of the lions gradually evolved to become a super lion monster. At that time, John and Hello Kitty were sleeping. Suddenly, a spider climbed on their bed and bit them. In the morning, they felt very sick and they fainted. When they regained consciousness, they felt they were very strong. John tried to pick up a table. To his surprise, he only used one finger but he could pick up the table. Hello Kitty was also as strong as John. They knew the super spider had passed to them the power of spiders. They were very excited.

One day, the super lion monster wanted to eat the animals in the farm. But it didn’t know that John and Hello Kitty had super power. So, it jumped into the farm and was going to catch the animals with his strong legs and sharp claws. Suddenly, John and Hello Kitty jumped out and screamed, “Hey! What are you doing?” Then they fought with the lion. The lion thought they were ordinary so it didn’t use all its power. But when the lion found that they are very strong and they could move like spiders, it was too late. The lion was then thrown out of the window.

The lion was very angry, so it told all the lions to kill John and Hello Kitty. That night, all the lions went to the house to kill them. John and Hello Kitty couldn’t win because there were too many lions. Suddenly, John merged with Hello Kitty and became a super spider cat-man. Therefore, they beat all the lions and the lions never came again.
Once upon a time, all giraffes had normal-length necks. They lived in the grassland and ate grass on level ground. However, there was a giraffe that was very special and different from the rest. She loved to wear necklaces all the time and she had collected more than sixty necklaces. One necklace she liked the most was decorated with pearls and jewels. She was always wearing it to show off at parties. But she had an enemy—Miss Bird, who loved to flaunt her wealth and jewellery, too.

One day, they disputed, “Who is the most beautiful?” They became very angry. Miss Bird yelled, “Ha! Ha! I will put your necklace at the top of the highest tree. I wish to see how you can get it!”

“How dare you do it!” the giraffe shouted. But Miss Bird still put it at the top of the tree and went away. The giraffe cried sadly and thought about how to get the necklace back. The giraffe stretched and elongated her neck every day in order to retrieve the necklace. Finally, the giraffe’s neck became longer and longer.

This is why giraffes have long necks now.
Dear Grace,

I am very happy to receive your email. How are you? I know you have a summer job at ‘Magic Mountain Theme Park’. So, can you buy me eight tickets at a cheaper price? I want to celebrate my friend, Tommy’s birthday there.

Now, I also have a summer job. I am a waiter in a restaurant called ‘Happy Restaurant’. I am always busy and the lunchtime is the busiest time during the whole day. I bring food to the customers and clean the tables non-stop. Although I feel very tired, I still enjoy this job.

I hope you can come and try the food. I will give you a 70% discount and let you have a dessert for free! I suggest you try the beef and vegetable dumplings because they are exceptionally tasty. The cook who works in the restaurant is one of the ‘Best 10 Cooks in China’. He has won many other prizes, too.

Anyway, remember to buy the tickets for me and come to try the yummy dumplings!

It is eleven o’clock now and I feel tired. I am going to bed. Please write back soon.

Take Care,
Ryan
Dear Joey,

How are you? I miss you very much. I’m looking forward to meeting you.

I am enjoying my new secondary school life in Pui Ching Middle School. Teachers and classmates at Pui Ching are very nice and smart. I have already known most of the classmates from Pui Ching Primary School. I love this school and I want to stay here for a long time.

Let’s talk about the subjects! I’m also weak in English but I suggest you listen to some English songs, watch English TV programmes and read more English books to improve your English.

Paying attention in class is a very important thing. I always talk loudly in class, too! However, once, I forced myself to pay attention to the teachers. At last, I succeeded and my test results improved. I’m so happy so I want to recommend this method to you.

If you want to make more friends, you should be friendly and helpful. Also, you should chat more with your classmates and teachers. Let them know you’re a lovely girl!

My new school life is quite good. I’m now the class monitor and the Chinese subject monitor. I am very happy and I hope I can be a responsible monitor. I hope my suggestions can help you. See you later!

Best wishes,
Leslie
A Day in Sunshine Zoo

Selina So 1D

Last weekend was a sunny day. I went to Sunshine Zoo with my family. When we arrived at the zoo, there were many people lining up at the entrance, so we had to wait for a long time. Many people felt annoyed and started complaining about it.

An hour later, when we entered the zoo, we ran to the Monkey Land as fast as we could since my brother loved monkeys very much. However, when we reached there, we saw some monkeys crammed in a tiny cage. We felt very disappointed because the monkeys looked sad. The cage was too small for the monkeys to play and move around.

When we were about to leave, something unusual happened. I discovered that the cage door was opened. Suddenly, one of the monkeys jumped out of the cage and snatched my little brother’s lollipop. It ran away quickly and disappeared in the bushes. My brother burst into tears. My parents tried to look for the staff. The only thing I could do was to stand by my brother and try to comfort him. In order to make my brother stop crying, I bought him an ice-cream.

The staff had searched for the monkey for about fifteen minutes. Finally, they caught it and locked it in a cage. They apologized to my parents for their carelessness. I hope it will not happen again in the future.
An Unforgettable Departure

Jinny Yeung 1D

I woke up early at 5 am because I had a nightmare last night. I dreamed that my grandma went to Heaven, but when I woke up, I found that it wasn’t only a dream. My mum told me that my grandma would not be able to live for more than one day, so I followed her to the hospital to visit my grandma.

When I arrived at the hospital, I saw a very old and weak woman sleeping on a bed. Although she was old and weak, she was always smiling. Her smile was very powerful. When I saw her smile, my unhappy feelings were all gone. I talked with my grandma for the whole afternoon, and she taught me a lot of things. When I was still small, my grandma was my best friend. She always cried and laughed with me, so I liked her so much. Now, in front of me was an old, kind lady who would go to Heaven soon. When I was thinking about it, tears started to trickle down my face. When my grandma saw my tears, she said to me, ‘My child, don’t be sad. I am not going to die. It is just God telling me to take a rest in Him. I am not scared, because I believe that this is the best choice of God. Let’s pray.’ So I prayed with her. While we were praying, I dreamed that God brought my grandma to a very beautiful place to play and rest. I felt relieved because I knew she would live happily there.

When I opened my eyes, I found that grandma was asleep and would never wake up again. I didn’t feel sad, because I believed that she would be happy after all. I will not forget her kind and lovely face. My grandma was smiling when she left us. I miss her sweet smile!
One sunny morning, I woke up and stretched. All of a sudden, I sensed something strange because I couldn’t touch the edge of my bed. When I looked at my bed, I was really shocked because my bed was five times bigger than me! I had shrunk and I was as small as a mouse! I had become miniature! I thought, if people can’t see me and they step on me, I am bound to die!

I headed for the hospital to see if the doctors could help me. Unfortunately, I met a huge dog on the way. It was barking at me, and I was really terrified. The dog seemed very hungry and wanted to eat me. I didn’t know what to do and I just kept praying!

Suddenly, I realized that as I was as small as a mouse, I would possibly fit in a mousehole. I ran as fast as I could. Finally, I reached the hole and hid in it. The dog couldn’t enter so it just walked away.

I didn’t go out that day because I was too scared to meet another dog again.

The next day I was back to normal. I hope I won’t become small again.
A Letter to a New Friend

Gordon Ip 1E

16 September 2009

Dear Chris,

How are you? It's nice to talk to you here. First, let me introduce myself. My name is Gordon, Ip Hon Lam. I will be thirteen on 10th February. When is your birthday? It's not a secret, is it? I live in Tai Po with my family. I am interested in playing football. I am also good at playing the piano. My favourite celebrity is Obama, who is the President of the United States. Who is your favourite public figure? Is it the Prime Minister of Australia?

I have been living in Hong Kong since I was born. Hong Kong is a very good place. Many tourists come to Hong Kong during the holidays. Have you been to Hong Kong before? I hope I can be your tour guide when you visit Hong Kong.

There are four members in my family. They are my father, mother, sister and me. Let me introduce them. My father is an interior designer. My mother is a bank teller. My sister is a Grade 11 student who studies in Canada. My mother and sister like to go shopping very much! My father and I usually play football on Sundays. We go to church every Sunday morning. We have a dog which is called Kobe.

I study in Pui Ching Middle School. I'm in Form 1E. I like my classmates because they are smart. My favourite subject is PE because I can play different ball games, such as volleyball and basketball. I'm also a member of the school orchestra. My school is very big, and there are many facilities. For example, there is a smart board in each classroom.

Can you introduce yourself? I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours,
Gordon
I Really Miss You, My Friend!

Jacqueline Wong 1E

Dear Hillary,

How are you? Nice to say “hello” to you again! We have been separated for almost 2 months! So how’s school? Have you made any new friends? Are they nice? (Do not tell me they are better than me, your best friend!) Cool to study overseas, right? Your teachers must be very kind and funny, not as strict as those in Hong Kong! Well, my school life is quite fun, too! There are a lot of new subjects that I’ve never heard of before. I quite like Science, because it is fun to do experiments. Do you have Science classes? I have made some new friends, too! They are all pretty nice but of course, you are the best!

What activities have you joined? I joined the History Club, the Science Club, the English Debating Team and the School Orchestra. You told me you like drama very much. If there is a school club for that, you really should join it!

I really miss you, my friend! I just went back to our primary school yesterday I really missed our primary school life! Mr. Lee is getting fatter and fatter! I almost burst into laughter when I saw him.

I hope you can have a great and successful year in Australia! Write back soon!

Love,
Jacqueline
My Space Journey

KiKi Ng  
1F

Last weekend, I went to space with my friends. It all started last Thursday, when I was talking with my friends, Mary and Michelle, after school. They said that they really wanted to go to space. They said that it was a mystical place and we could fly there so we went to NASA on Friday to make a reservation and we set off the next day.

When we arrived in space, we saw many stars around us. They were very beautiful.

“Wow! It's so spacious here,” said Michelle.

“I love it. It's much bigger than Hong Kong!” said Mary happily.

“Now, we are next to Mars. If you look out the windows, you can see how attractive it is,” said the tour guide of the space journey.

After that, we went to the moon. The moon was very beautiful. It was not like the moon that we saw from Earth. The tour guide told us that we could put on a spacesuit and walk on the moon like the astronauts did. We put on the spacesuits and left the spaceship, but the spacesuit was very heavy. We all carried a walkie-talkie so the tour guide could keep contact with us.

I played hide-and-seek with Mary and Michelle on the moon. When we grew tired, we decided to go back to the spaceship but when we tried to reach our tour guide through the walkie-talkie, nobody answered. We were very afraid that the communication system had broken down. We cried for help loudly, but nobody came to rescue us.

A few minutes later, we saw an ET approaching us. We were frightened and we screamed loudly. The ET stopped in front of us suddenly and started laughing. We did not know why it kept on laughing. After ten minutes, we could not stop ourselves from laughing too.
Then, it took off its mask. It was, our tour guide. We felt surprised but also angry because he was making fun of us.

At last, we went back to Earth safely. It was a very exciting space journey and I will not forget this trip for the rest of my life.
Giving Advice to Sidney
Irene Yeung 1F

Dear Sidney,

Thank you for your letter. I am happy that you would like to be my pen friend. As you know, my name is Irene. Let me introduce myself first.

I’m studying at Pui Ching Middle School. It’s a famous school. I like it very much. I like to read in my leisure time. I like reading novels, comics and detective stories.

Oh! I almost forget that I should tell you something about my family first. I have a sister who is called Stephanie. She is very beautiful. I will send you my family photo next time so that you can know how my sister and I look.

After reading about your problem in your letter, I came up with some suggestions. I think you shouldn’t spend too much time playing football or else you may become so tired that you may not have enough energy for school the next day.

Moreover, you can explain to your parents that you really love playing football and ask them the latest time that you need to be home. Maybe you can suggest setting your curfew at 19:30.

Finally, I think it’s not bad to play football. It can make you strong and healthy, but remember to spare some time for revision every night before you go to bed. Otherwise, your academic performance may be affected adversely. Hope my suggestions will be useful to you.

Please write back soon. Keep in touch!

Love,
Irene
Irene
My Favourite Invention
Benjamin Chan 2A

My favourite invention? Usually people will say computer, but not me. It makes me wear eyeglasses. If you ask me, I’ll answer you: pen. Pen, which helps me record something to remember.

When I am at school, my pen is almost helping me all the time. On the handbook, I use my pen to jot down what homework I have to do on which day. For homework, I do maths and write essays with a pen. It helps me learn more easily and remember better. Taking notes during lessons can also help me remember more things more easily.

In the ancient times, people used feather pens. Dipping ink was very troublesome. Craving stone to record information was very time-consuming and hard to preserve. But nowadays, pens can help me write fast. They are easy to keep and thus I don’t have to dip ink.

Pens can also help me write letters to all my friends and relatives. Distance between people is reduced. Writing letters helps us understand each other more.

Some people can play tricks with a pen such as rotating it with their fingers. Usually they do this when they are bored. I think it is kind of interesting. Once, my father even told me that rotating a pen made him calculate faster, too.

Pen is an invention that we can’t afford to lose. If there were no pens, I would not even be able to write all these.
My Favourite Invention

Erica Leung 2A

My favourite invention is ice-lolly. It is also my favourite dessert. Ice-lolly was invented by Frank Epperson. He was eleven years old when he invented an ice-lolly. One day, Frank mixed some soda water powder with water and left the mixture on the back porch overnight with a stick. That night the temperature dropped to a low record. The mixture changed to a frozen soda lolly.

In the summer, an air-conditioner can help us to fight against the hot weather. Ice-lollies also produce this effect. Ice-lollies are conveniently accessible. When we are on the street, we can buy an ice-lolly to get rid of the summer heat.

Ice-lollies are very tasty and there are a lot of different flavours to choose from. Some of them are really healthy because they contain less sugar and 100% fresh fruit.

The majority of ice-lollies are affordable, just about four dollars to seven dollars each. It is certainly worth paying a few dollars so as to enjoy a few minutes of coolness.

Nowadays, ice lollies come in a lot of different flavours. If you don’t like these flavours, you can even make your own ice-lolly easily.

You can also add some fruit pulp in your ice lollies. The feeling in the mouth will be really rich and palatable.

Although ice-lolly is just a simple invention, it brings us a lot of happy memories in the hot summer. No matter you are rich or poor, you can absolutely afford it at least once in your life.
Some Good Ideas for Beyond 2010
Barry Chu  2A

If I need to think about some good ideas for beyond 2010, I will think of some inventions to improve our lives, and the lives of the disabled people.

First, I want to invent a robot which is able to do all the housework. It is because my mother is very tired and she finds it hard to finish all the housework by herself. If there is a robot which can help her, she will feel much better. She can have more time to do things she enjoys.

And then, I want to invent an infra-red ray system to be put in a light bulb or an air-conditioner that can detect people in a room. When someone comes into the room, the infra-red ray system detects him and will turn on the light or the air-conditioner automatically. When there is no one in the room, it will turn off the electrical appliances instead. I think it can improve pollution.

Finally, I want to invent a sensor for blind people. If the blind people are near some obstacles, the sensor gives out sound to alert them. Then, they won’t crash into anyone or anything. They will be much safer, too.

If these things can really be invented, I think they can help people improve their lives. The first invention can help housewives; the second one can tackle the pollution problem while the third one can help the disabled.
Some Good Ideas for Beyond 2010

Before 2009, there were many inventions like aeroplanes, paper, the Internet, computers and so on. These inventions have changed our lives and let us live easily. Inventions are our forebears’ knowledge and work. They help us do lots of things that are impossible by our hands, like flying, communicating with people far away and learning at home. Now, air pollution is a big problem for us, so I would like to invent a car that doesn’t use petroleum but uses light as its source of energy.

This car uses light as its energy, so it doesn’t pollute our environment. Also, if the car uses light as the source of power, we don’t need petroleum so we don’t need to be afraid that there is no gas station, and that your car can’t move! For the sake of our environment, we must invent this car!

There are many disasters on Earth, like earthquakes, hurricanes, thunderstorms and sandstorms, etc. The most dangerous one is earthquake. It’s because earthquakes can make buildings tumble down and cause tsunamis. So, I would like to invent a house which can fly into the sky if there’s an earthquake and stick to the ground if there’s a hurricane or sandstorm. The house can be on a road which leads to any place and which is moving. That means you can stand on the road, then the road will move to the place you want to go to, so you don’t need to move at all! It would be nice!

Now, some scientists find that much methane is released from the North Pole. Methane is a kind of dangerous gas. It is poisonous and inflammable. It can make the greenhouse effect even more serious, so I would like to find a kind of gas which can replace methane and at the same time won’t aggravate the greenhouse effect.

If my ideas can be realized, I believe our Earth will become more beautiful and much cooler!
Some Good Ideas for Beyond 2010

Shelley Lam 2A

Beyond 2010, what will happen to the world? Now, we are all facing the same alarming problem, pollution.

My first idea is the invention of a machine to purify the air. Today, there are too much carbon dioxide and waste gases in the air, causing the global temperature to increase. Currently, there are some machines for households to purify air. However, I hope there could be a giant machine on Earth that could clean the air of a country or even the whole world.

My second idea is the invention of wind–powered cars. Today, cars are the main sources of air pollution, so we need to remove this source of pollution. One solution is for us to stop using cars completely, yet unlikely. Alternatively, we could use other forms of energy to run cars. My idea is wind power, but of course, solar energy or other forms of renewable energy can be used also.

My third idea is the invention of an extremely powerful fan. Air-conditioners consume a lot of electricity. Many people turn on their air-conditioners whenever they feel hot. They choose to use air-conditioners instead of fans. However, if the fans could be cooler like the air-conditioners, energy consumption would be reduced and electricity bills would also be cheaper. It is more environmentally friendly.

These ideas are all feasible solutions to the problem of pollution. I hope scientists will invent these machines so we can protect the environment together.
My best friend is Harry. He is the same age as me. He is of medium build and has short, light and black hair. He wears thick glasses due to serious myopia. He is very tall, at least taller than I am. He usually wears a pair of jeans and a black T-shirt with funny pictures on it.

We both share similar hobbies. We both enjoy sports such as swimming, cycling, playing football and basketball. We like the same football team, basketball team, singer and even the brand of pens! Sometimes, we like playing the violin together, which is fun! We both enjoy our music and learn skills from each other. I like to read books with Harry because we like the same books. Hence, we can share our opinions of the books.

I met Harry four years ago. From then on, we have been in the same class for four years, isn’t it amazing? We didn’t talk to each other at first because I am a shy person. Then one day, I forgot to bring my dictionary and he lent me his immediately. Our friendship was built on this event. In my leisure time, I spend most of it with Harry. Sometimes we help each other to finish our homework; sometimes we study together to prepare for the exam.

I am very happy when I am with Harry. But one day, I found that my lovely pen had disappeared. I immediately thought that Harry must have stolen it because he had lost one which was the same as mine. I interrogated him but he denied. I was very angry. From that day onwards, I didn’t talk to him unless it was necessary. But two months later, I discovered a pen on the floor under my bed – it was the one which I had accused Harry of stealing! I apologized to him, and he forgave me. He was so generous! I was so ashamed. I really hope that the friendship and ties between Harry and me will never break.
Do you know who Kao Kuen, Charles is? I am sure that many people know his name because he has just got the Nobel Prize in Physics for his groundbreaking achievements concerning the transmission of light in fibres for optical communication. Let me introduce this famous inventor to you. Mr. Kao is the inventor of Fiber Optic Communications. He is also known as the “Father of Fiber Optic Communications”. He was born in Shanghai on 4th November, 1933 and he is now 75 years old. He is also a resident of Hong Kong, England and the United States. He has a younger brother called Kao Woo.

When Mr. Kao was young, he studied Chinese Classics at home with his brother. He also studied English and French at an international school in Shanghai that was founded by a number of famous Chinese educators including Cài Yuánpéi. In 1948, his family moved to Taiwan and then to Hong Kong. Mr. Kao completed his secondary education at St. Joseph's College in Hong Kong in 1952. He received his university education in the United Kingdom and obtained his Doctoral degree from the Imperial College in 1965.

In early 1960s, Mr. Kao did his research work on using fibre optics as a telecommunication medium. He proved that the high-loss of existing fiber optics was due to the impurities in the glass, rather than the problem of technology itself. The results were first presented by Mr. Kao in early 1966. His ideas of using glass fibers to implement optical communication (especially structural features and materials) are the basis of today's optical fibre communication. Without his invention, we would not be able to communicate with one another so easily and quickly.
A long long time ago, a clever boy called Michael had a father and a younger sister, Jenny. His mother died when his sister was born. After his mother’s death, his father married a stepmother. The stepmother disliked Michael and Jenny, so she always beat them when their father went to the jungle to cut wood.

One day, their stepmother brought them to the jungle and left them there. Michael and Jenny were very scared because they did not know how to go back home. They walked and walked, walked and walked for a long time, but they could not find their way home.

Suddenly Jenny kicked a wooden box. Michael and she opened the box and they found that there were two pairs of shoes in it. The box also had an instructions leaflet. The leaflet said that the shoes were magical ones. If the users wear them and tell them where they want to go, magic will bring them wherever according to their will.

After Michael and Jenny had read the instructions leaflet, they felt happy because they could use the shoes to go back home. They wore the shoes and said together, “We want to go back home!”

After a few seconds, they discovered that they were home again. They were happy and when their father saw them, he was happy, too! He said to Michael and Jenny, “when I knew your stepmother had left you in the jungle, I was angry so I expelled her from home. I know that you will be together!”

After that, Michael, Jenny and their father lived together happily.
My Helpful Friend, Amanda

Joyce Wong  2B

Amanda is my best friend. We have been friends for four years. Amanda is a beautiful girl. She has long and black hair. And she is so slim. Her eyes are big and round. And she has a small mouth. She usually wears a T-shirt and jeans.

Amanda and I were in the same class when we were in primary school. When we first met, we talked about many things. Amanda is a friendly girl. When I don’t understand my homework, she teaches me. We do everything together, so we just look like a pair of twins. She is a caring person, too. When I feel sad, I tell her all my worries and she is really a great listener. Also, she always tells me many things that happened around her. She is a hard-working student because she studies at night when she has time. So, when I don’t understand the things that my teacher has told me, I often ask her.

Amanda is a really great person. She is helpful. For example, one night, our group project wasn’t finished but we had to hand it in the next day. We tried to finish it before ten o’clock but there were some problems and I needed to go to bed at eleven o’clock. The next morning, Amanda gave me our project and told me that she had finished it at two o’clock in the morning. I was so sorry but I felt happy that I had this good friend.

I hope that we can keep our friendship forever.
A Modern Fairy Tale
Rain Lee 2B

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful lady called Maria, who lived in a small village. Her husband had died a few years before. She lived in a cottage with animals and she sang with them everyday.

One day, she went to get some water from a well. Carelessly, she dropped her necklace which her husband had given her. She panicked and wanted to get the necklace back. Just when her fingers reached the necklace, she lost her balance and fell into the well. Maria fainted. When she woke up, she found herself coming out from a fireplace in a modern city house and her body was full of dust. She saw a little boy who was sitting on a sofa eating fruit. She was nervous so she searched for somewhere to hide. She ran into a room and hid in a wardrobe. She was scared of the outside world, so she stayed inside for two days and had nothing to eat or drink.

Luckily, the dad of the little boy came back. When he opened the wardrobe’s door, he found that there was a lady and she was very weak. Then, he gave her some food and water. Maria told him that she had come from the past. The man was very surprised, but he didn’t care. The man also told her his name ‘Tom’. Maria didn’t know where she could go, so Tom asked her to stay in his house. Tom really wanted Maria to stay because he thought Maria looked like his former wife and he loved Maria at first sight.

Because Maria had come from the past, she wasn’t familiar with the modern things. She always marvelled at the electrical appliances, so Tom taught her how to use them, and Maria told him about the peaceful life she had had in the small village. However, Tom’s son hated Maria. He always played tricks on Maria, but they got closer after staying together for a long time. Also, Maria was in love with Tom and they got married at last. Maria lived with him happily and never went back to the past.
Dear Sally,

How are you? I am sorry to hear that you have such a problem with your body size. I think the problem can easily be solved but first, you have to be totally clear about the definition of being overweight.

Being thin is often misunderstood as the symbol of vogue but that is only a myth. According to scientific research, if our BMI is between nineteen to twenty-four, we are within the standard range of being healthy. Therefore, I suggest you calculate your BMI first before planning to lose weight.

Here are some tips to lose weight. Firstly, you should design a balanced diet that contains enough nutrients and fibre to provide energy for your daily life. Also, you should eat more fruits and vegetables. You should never skip meals; otherwise you may faint. Secondly, you should do more exercise instead of playing computer games in your free time. You can burn calories and be healthier at the same time if you exercise regularly.

However, you should never take any slimming medicine that you are not familiar with. Also, never believe in the effects promoted in those slimming advertisements because they aren’t always true.

At the end, I want to emphasize that being thin and beautiful doesn’t necessarily mean popularity or success. As long as you are kind and have a good character, you can always be the angel in everybody’s heart.

Please write back soon and tell me more about your decision.

Love,

Minnie
A Profile of Walt Disney

Carrie Keung  2C

Walt Disney was born on 5th December 1901 in Chicago. He was the fourth kid of Elias Disney and Flora Call. In 1906, the Disney's moved to a farm where Walt Disney developed his love for drawing and became fascinated by trains.

Walt Disney had founded a short-lived company with his friend, Iwerks, before he became an animator, but soon it closed. Then, Disney and his brother set up a cartoon studio in Hollywood. They produced a few cartoons including the Alice Comedies. In 1928, Disney lost most of his animation staff unfortunately. It took him 78 years to get back the rights to the Oswald character.

After losing the rights of Oswald, Disney based the character on a mouse he had adopted as a pet. It was Mickey Mouse. On a business trip to Chicago in 1040s, Disney considered the possibility of building an amusement park where he could bring his children to. The original idea soon developed into a concept for a larger project that later became Disneyland. Disney spent five years developing Disneyland and created a new subsidiary of his company, WED Enterprises to carry out the planning and construction of the park. Disneyland officially opened on 17th July 1955.

In 1966, Walt Disney collapsed at home. He died on 15th December 1966.

Walt Disney is a very good role model for me because he achieved his aim and dream by working hard. Everyone has his own dream and he should try his best to make it come true.
A Letter to Joyce

Chris Yu  2C

Dear Joyce,

Thank you for your letter. You seem to be unhappy at the moment but don’t worry. Things will be better.

I know that you have some problems about making friends. Take it easy. I will help you. First of all, you should be more confident. Try to talk more with your classmates. Let your classmates know more about you. If I were you, I would join some extra-curricular activities or school clubs. It is easier for you to make friends and find someone that has common interests with you. You should always smile to comfort the ones beside you. You can also ask for help from your older brothers and sisters or the school counselor. They may help to solve your problems.

I learnt that you are teased by your classmates because of your appearance. I once had the same problem too. I was a fat boy. In my class, no one wanted to play with me. I felt desperate. So, I started to do more exercise and joined the school Sports Club. Don’t try to take the diet pills. They will damage your health. Also, think seriously before eating, stay away from junk food. Now, I am a healthy, strong boy. And I meet a lot of friends at the Sports Club, too.

I think you should tell your mother your problems and your feelings. You shouldn’t hide your problems. Talk to her more about your school days and your interests. Be brave.

I hope that my advice can help you. You can write to me again in a month or two and let me know how you are getting on.

Last but not least, look on the bright side of life.

All the best,

Chris
Alfred Nobel

As a brilliant inventor, Alfred Nobel is famous not only for developing power explosives but also for setting up the Nobel Prize to recognise outstanding people in different fields.

Nobel was the third son of a Swedish engineer. When he was eight years old, he moved to Russia with his family.

In Russia, though Nobel’s father was busy with his factory, he cared about his sons’ studies very much. He hired a tutor to teach his children various subjects at home and he gradually discovered that Nobel was very clever but shy.

Nobel was a versatile genius. He liked science very much because he was keen on experimentation. He also did well in languages for he could speak and write in five languages after several years. Nobel developed his passion on literature during his childhood. He liked reading and writing poems very much. However, Nobel’s father was not pleased about this. He wanted Nobel to spend more time on science because he wanted his son to help him in the future.

Nobel later went to Paris and worked in a Chemistry laboratory, during which he became interested in explosives. At that time, many inventors were keen on developing new forms of explosives because the substance was very useful in construction. Nobel also wanted to do so. At the age of nineteen, Nobel returned to Russia and worked in his father’s factory where he started to work on a new kind of explosive.

When he moved back to Sweden with his family, he established his own factory to produce explosives. His young brother, Emil, helped him to do experiments. But one day, a serious accident happened when Emil was doing an experiment. In the end, Emil and four other workers died and Nobel was extremely sad.
Because of the accident, Nobel’s neighbors started to complain. So, he carried on with his experiments in a boat. Two years later, he came up with a very powerful but safe form of explosive.

As Nobel’s new form of explosive was cheap and safe, people used it widely in construction work. Nobel got a lot of business and became rich. In the following years, Nobel set up factories in more than twenty countries to produce explosives. During this time, Nobel continued to do experiments trying to discover useful materials because he had always wanted to improve people’s life with handy inventions.

Besides this, Nobel carried on with his other interests. He read a lot of literature. He wrote poems and plays and he also made friends with famous poets and writers. Some years later, people began to use Nobel’s powerful explosives in wars. Nobel felt very unhappy about that. As a result, in his final years, he decided to set up the Nobel Prize.

After his death, Nobel Prize was set up. In 1901, the first batch of winners was chosen. Nowadays, selected people with extraordinary achievements in their fields are awarded Nobel prizes every year.
My Dearest Friend, Zebedee

Martin Wong   2D

Zebedee and I have been friends since Form One. Although we had some misunderstandings in the past, we always reconcile them because we trust each other. Therefore, no problems can separate Zebedee and me.

Zebedee is thirteen years old. He is chubby. He has short black hair with a pair of little eyes. His two lovely dimples appear when he smiles. He is very cute.

Zebedee has a lot of merits, so he's one of my role models and I respect him very much. If I have any problems with my homework, Zebedee teaches me patiently. He always reminds me when I have made mistakes or when I do naughty things. He is not only kind but also generous because he always shares the new things that he has learnt with me. I believe that I can improve my knowledge because I can learn from him. My enthusiasm makes him more optimistic.

Zebedee and I like eating very much. We have lunch together every day and we try to taste all the yummy food near the school. We spend lunchtime talking with each other, so we understand each other very well.

He is good at all subjects except sports. He doesn't like to do exercise, so he is not very healthy. He gets sick easily. He is very interested in aeroplanes. I admire him very much because he knows almost everything about aeroplanes.

Zebedee doesn't have any brothers or sisters. Sometimes, I think I really want to be his elder brother. We have happy times whenever we are together. I hope that we can be best friends forever.
Dear Joyce,

Thank you for writing me a letter. I'm sorry to hear about your problems. You seem to be unhappy at the moment. But don't worry. I'll try my best to help you.

In order to make more new friends, I think you should be more outgoing. After reading your letter, I think you are too quiet. Talk more to your classmates. Be brave. Don't be afraid of being laughed at because people who laugh at you are not your true friends. Therefore, please don't mind.

Regarding the problem about your appearance, don't let the situation overwhelm you. I was unhappy with the way I looked once, but now everyone tells me I look great! I think you could try to join some school clubs. Joining sports teams and doing exercise can make you fitter and stronger. It also helps you to make more new friends. I know that you are a bit overweight, but remember, don't take the diet pills, because they are bad for your health. Looks are not everything. Don't hurt yourself. Take care of your health and be careful of what you eat and your looks will improve. Trust me!

I hope my advice is helpful to you. You can write to me again in a month or two and let me know how you get on. Good luck and remember - YOU CAN DO IT!

Yours,

Natalie
A Letter to Mum

Joanne Chan  2E

23 September 2009

Dear Mother,

How are you? Do you feel tired? Are you upset? Do you need to take a rest?

I know that every morning you wake up early to prepare breakfast for us. While we are having our breakfast, you tidy our bedrooms. Then you dress yourself to get ready for work, and at the same time take us to school. After we have safely arrived at school, you then hurry to work.

At work, even if your boss is angry with you, or gives you a lot of work to do, you still work hard without complaining. During lunchtime, you work so hard that you do not even have time to have lunch. After a busy day, you then go to the supermarket to buy food for our dinner and return home as quickly as you can. I know you are very tired! However, you still have to cook dinner for us.

After dinner, we can go to bed, but you can’t. When the house becomes dark and quiet, I can hear some noise and lights from the kitchen. It is you! You then wash the dishes. You spend all your time on us. You sacrifice your sleeping time by doing all the housework. After you have done all your housework, you can finally rest for about four to five hours.

I know that you are exhausted, but you never stop. I know that you love us more than anyone. You want us to have a good life. You want us to focus on learning and develop our own interests. That is why you work so hard even though you feel extremely tired. I know that. I have always known that.

Therefore, mum, I will study hard. When I grow up, I will pay you back as much as I can. I will buy you a big house, lots of good food and give you a good life.

Your daughter,

Joanne.
A long long time ago, there was a girl who lived in Africa — The Sahara Desert. All we know was that there were only sand and dust in the desert. The family of the girl was nomads. They brought camels with them and lived in the desert. One day, the girl found a rose seed in the middle of the desert. She didn’t know what to do with it, so she brought the seed home and asked her parents.

Her parents saw the seed, and said, “You won’t be able to plant the seed in the desert as we don’t have enough water.” But the girl didn’t listen to her parents. She took her bottle of water and looked for a nice place to grow her rose. When she found the right place for the rose seed, she put it in the sand and poured water on it.

She did the same thing every day. Still, the flower didn’t come out from the sand. Then one day, the girl heard a voice from heaven, “You’re going to be granted a wish. What do you want the most?” The girl made a reply honestly. “Can I have more water for the seed and for my family?” After a few seconds, a big pond of fresh water appeared in front of her. The girl went forward to the pond and got some water for the seed.

A flower finally came out from the sand the next day. The girl felt very happy. She watered the flower every day with the water from the pond. One day, the girl heard a voice from the rose, “Little girl, you can see that I am in full blossom now. Every flower will reach the end its life soon after it blooms. But please don’t be upset about that.”

The girl was really confused by the words of the rose. She asked the flower again and again. “Why don’t you live a bit longer?” The rose just answered the girl again and again, “This is my destiny. What I can only do is to live as happily as I can because my life is so short.” The girl was still not very happy about this. And she prayed to God and asked whether the flower could...
live a bit longer. God heard the girl’s prayer, and said, “Life is something limited. That’s something nobody could change.”

The flower finally withered. But the girl didn’t feel unhappy or upset at all. It was because she finally learnt that we should treasure our life as life is limited. Death could let us know that being alive is truly a blessing.
The Christmas Gift

Seen Lee  2E

It was Christmas Eve, and nothing seemed to be unusual. It was a normal night.

Suddenly, a man appeared in the sky. He was wearing a red suit and a red hat, sitting in a sleigh pulled by a few reindeers. We all know that he should be Santa Claus, but the people in this town didn’t think so.

“What’s going on with that man?” asked a little girl. “How do I know?” answered her mom, “He’s a crazy guy from the hospital.” However, her father didn’t agree, “No, someone is shooting a film.” The girl was satisfied with the answer, so she didn’t ask any more questions.

Many other people saw Santa, too, but they didn’t care about things happening around them. Their heart was as cold as the snow outside.

Santa’s sleigh landed in the town. Santa picked up his big red bag full of presents and started looking for a house to start his job.

Some readers would say, “Santa Claus should be giving presents by putting them into chimneys!” Well, fireplaces were outdated, so those houses didn’t have chimneys anymore.

Santa came to a big house. He knocked on the door. A little boy opened the door and stared at his strange costume. “Who are you?” asked the boy. “I’m Santa and I come here to give you presents.” “What? Oh! I remember you! Textbooks say that Santa Claus is just an imaginative figure that people made up to cheat small children! I won’t believe you!” Then, he closed the door.

“What?” Santa couldn’t believe what he had heard! “What are the schools teaching them?” He walked to the next house and knocked on the door.
“Who are you? May I help you?” a woman asked. “Oh, I just want to give you some Christmas presents!” The woman was confused, “What? Present?” Then she closed the door.

Santa was totally bewildered. This was the fifth town he had visited that night. But the people here were so strange!

He told himself not to give up, and walked to the next house. He knocked on the door once more.

“Hi,” It’s a little girl. She looked at Santa’s suit for a few seconds, then she said to someone inside the house, “Mom, the crazy man from the hospital is here!” Santa was confused, “I’m Santa Claus and I just want to give you some presents!” But the girl’s mom just walked to the door and shut it.

Santa could not believe it. Are the people here crazy? Even the children do not have the pure heart full of creative imaginations. What’s going on?

Then, he saw a girl standing on a quiet street with a basket full of matches. When the girl saw him, she asked, “Could you just buy a few matches?”

Santa bought all of the matches and gave her a pair of new shoes. Then, he left this strange town on his sleigh pulled by the reindeers, and was never to be seen again.
A Letter of Advice –
Tips on Becoming Braver
Eric Chan 2F

Dear Tom,

I’ve just got your letter. I’m worried about your problem. I’ve just found something you can do to solve the problem.

What you should do is try to be brave! How can you keep being shy when you are older and become a grown-up? In my opinion, no one will laugh at you. I have seen some people who are successful because they are brave. For example, Susan Boyle is 48 years old. She’s fat, and she doesn’t look good. However, she sang brilliantly in British Got Talent. At first, everyone was laughing at her but she didn’t feel nervous. She sang so well that as soon as she finished singing the first sentence, everyone was clapping and feeling incredible! I was stunned the first time I heard her sing on TV. How could she amaze everybody and succeed? It’s because she did not care about the way people laughed at her. And if you learn from her, I believe you can be as confident as she is.

Another successful man that I want to introduce to you is Obama, the President of America. He is the first and only Black President in the United States ever. Since most Americans are white, some of them may not like and even discriminate against the Black. However, Mr. Obama was brave. He beat his opponents and became the President of the United States of America! He can do it, and you? Why not?

I know it’s hard to do at first, but believe me - You can do it!

Best,
Eric
A Blog Entry of a Movie Star

Cynthia Lau   2F

14th October, 2009

I have a very busy schedule and seldom have any day off but suddenly I realize that I can have a holiday tomorrow. I have a lot of things that I want to do in mind but I am fully aware that I cannot finish all of them in just one day. Anyway, I want to visit my parents who live in a small village in the New Territories. They live there because they prefer a quiet life.

As a movie star, I am always followed by a lot of fans. In addition, a large group of reporters with cameras are always waiting for me no matter where I go. I understand that they’re just doing their job but my personal life is affected. I sometimes feel that my privacy has been jeopardized and invaded. I sincerely do not want this to happen during my rare holiday tomorrow. I plan to leave home with a mask so that no one can recognize me and I can enjoy my holiday with my parents freely. I choose to visit them because they’re the dearest to me and fewer people will recognize me in the small village where they live in. They’re very happy to know that I will be visiting them but at the same time they’re a bit worried about the overwhelming warmth of my fans. Please control your emotion if you happen to be there.
One day, I fell asleep on the MTR and when I woke up, the train was empty. I got off the train, ran out of the station and saw that all the streets and buildings were empty. I couldn’t see anybody at all. I was scared, so I called my mum.

“Mum! Mum! I…I don’t know where I am. Nobody is here! Mum! Help me! I want to go home! Help me! Mum…!” I screamed in terror.

Mum didn’t answer me.

“Doo.. Doo…Doo…” I was cut off.

After a few seconds, I heard some noise, ”Ah!” “Oh! My god!” Someone was screaming on the phone. Then, there was a loud bang as if something had crashed together. I put down my phone on the ground and sat in the middle of the street. I was totally helpless and hopeless so I started to cry.

“Why am I in this place? I want to go home! Now! But what can I do?” I asked myself desperately.

When I stopped talking to myself, the sky turned into darkness suddenly. Then, I noticed some figures walking on the street. When I tried to take a closer look, I discovered that they were all strange aliens, not humans.

I hid behind a car parking beside the road stealthily. I waited and looked around the street and observed what the aliens were doing. “Oh, no!” They were shopping, chatting and doing things just like normal humans. Two minutes later, one of them picked up my phone and walked towards me. My heart beat faster and faster.

“Is it yours?” he asked gently.
“Yes, it is mine. Thank you!” I answered nervously. “Is this your first time here?” he asked.

“Yes, I want to go home but I got lost,” I replied.

“Let me help you!” he offered.

Then, I told him my address and he led the way.

We walked slowly. When we arrived, the alien walking beside me disappeared suddenly. He left me without saying good-bye!

I went into my house and saw my favourite personal photo on my bookshelf, and the television was on just like any other ordinary day.

It was already 11pm and my parents weren’t at home. So, I sat on the sofa and watched the news. The anchor said that there had been a train accident in Causeway Bay that morning. One train had gone on the wrong track so it clashed with another train of the opposite direction. All passengers on the train died… “Oh! My goodness!” I was frozen with horror by the news.

I stood up, and walked in front of my big mirror. I was scared stiff - I couldn’t see myself!
Dear Jane,

Hi! How are you and your pets? I am sorry for not writing to you for a month but I went to Mainland China for a holiday. Let me tell you something about my stressful trip.

I went to three places with my family during this summer holiday. They were Beijing – the first stop, Shanghai- the second stop and Hangzhou- the last stop. Hangzhou is my mum’s home town but unfortunately something dreadful happened there.

We arrived at the hotel in Hangzhou at midnight, so we took a quick shower and went to bed immediately. After lying on the bed for a few minutes, I started coughing and had difficulty in breathing. Oh, No! my asthma was breaking out! I woke my mum for help, and then tried to calm myself down by taking a few deep breaths. I also inhaled some medical powder for quick relief. Finally, my breathing became normal again. My mum and I let out a long sigh of relief. The feeling of asphyxia was truly terrible! For a moment I thought I was dying!

I consulted the doctor next morning. The doctor said my asthma was probably caused by the dusty blanket, bed linen and the carpet in the hotel room. He suggested that in future we stay at another hotel in a cleaner environment and that I should take my own pillow instead of using the one provided by the hotel. I will definitely follow his advice as I don't want this “unforgettable experience” to happen again.

I know that you have adopted three hamsters from the SPCA. It is really kind of you to take care of those poor animals. Honestly, I am a bit envious of you because I am not allowed to keep animals for my whole life or even just play with them for a while; otherwise, my asthma will break out because of the hair of the animals. This illness is annoying and affects my daily life as all kind
of irritating smells, pollen, smoke, dust, mites and mould; mildew will put me in danger. I hope one day the experts can find a method to cure asthma. Although I can't play with your hamsters, I still want to have a look of them. Can you send me their pictures?

I am looking forward to your next letter with your cute hamsters' pictures.

Love,
Ocean
Dear Edith,

How are you getting on? Are you still seriously suffering from insomnia? I have done some research on insomnia in order to help. Let me share my findings with you.

Insomnia may be caused by different reasons. In your case, I think you are suffering from insomnia because you have work-related problems. You feel anxious and are constantly under tremendous pressure. All these reasons may lead to insomnia. You said that your company was having financial difficulties, so you were deeply depressed and thus was lost sleep at night.

To help you alleviate insomnia, I have a few suggestions for you. First, you may drink a cup of hot milk or take a hot bath before you go to bed, They can help you relax your nerves and your body so you may be able to fall asleep easily.

If you still suffer from insomnia after trying the aforementioned remedy, you may consider consulting a doctor. He can help you to find out the main reason and solve your problem step by step. And he may give you some medicine to help you sleep. It is the best way to help you to have sweet dreams again.

These are my suggestions to help you feel better. Insomnia can lead to serious health problems. Hope you can solve it quickly and have sweet dreams soon. Write back!

Yours,

Samantha
Dear Edith,

How are you? Thank you for your letter. Don’t be so anxious! I am going to tell you some possible reasons for your insomnia and ways that can alleviate your problem.

Let me speculate on the possible reasons for your insomnia. Are there any examinations coming? I know you tend to be very nervous before examinations. You always revise for your examinations days and nights, which is not good for your health!

A healthy person should go to bed before twelve o’clock. I remember once you told me that you always suffered from stomachache before examinations. This problem reflects that you are too nervous and are not used to examinations.

Have a good rest, my friend! It’s more important to have good rest before taking examinations. You can review your schoolwork everyday for thirty minutes. Then, you won’t need to spend almost 24 hours a day to do your revision before examinations.

Besides, do you have a regular daily routine? A regular daily routine is very important for us. We should sleep eight hours every day in order to replenish our energy and have good spirits for the coming day. Also, do you have dinner regularly? Don’t eat too much and don’t drink tea or coke before you go to bed!

Last but not least, you should do exercise regularly, too. Exercise can help us to maintain quality sleep.

Hope my advice can help. Looking forward to hearing your good news.

Yours,
Stephanie
Dear Edith,

Hi! How are you doing? Last time you mentioned in your letter that you’ve been seriously suffering from insomnia. I am worried about you and that’s why I’m writing to give you some suggestions.

Insomnia is a kind of sleeping disorder. It can be caused by stress, fear, emotional or mental tension and work problems. Some food or drinks like coffee and tea may also cause insomnia because they contain caffeine. Owing to insomnia, the sufferer may become anxious, fidgety, bad-tempered or depressed.

If you are troubled by work-related problems, I suggest that you find out the source of your anxiety and solve it and thus you can sleep in peace afterwards. Don’t drink coffee, tea or coke before you go to bed.

If you feel anxious and troubled, you should calm down and try to relax. When you can’t help tossing and turning, and have difficulty in falling asleep, just get up and do something else until you feel sleepy.

I’ve surfed the Internet and looked for some information for you. According to a medical website, “Mild insomnia may be treated by improving sleeping conditions or through traditional remedies such as warm baths, milk, systematic relaxation. Severe insomnia may be cured by going to the clinic and taking drugs such as tranquilizers, but such drugs are often addictive and may harm your mind.”

I couldn’t agree more with it so you should try the traditional remedies first. If the situation doesn’t improve, you’d better consult a doctor.

I hope you do not need to take drugs. Don’t give up! Write a reply soon. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Love,
Jasmine
I was lying on the soft grass, looking at the sapphire sky. Those snowy clouds were floating in bright blue, constantly changing their shape. The breeze blew gently, like my mother stroking my face. I could hear the wind rustling the leaves. I closed my eyes to enjoy the lovely melody, which was performed by the birds and insects. The scent of flowers and the smell of grass was pleasant.

After climbing for two hours, we finally found this peaceful place to have a rest. I just wanted time to stop at this moment. Everything was amazing! “See, Emma, there is a little cat!” I shouted with excitement.

Emma was lying under a tree relaxing. “What’s so surprising, Alice? You can always see cats on the streets,” Emma answered in a lazy voice.

The little black cat was walking slowly towards me, and finally stopped in front of me. It was a lovely fluffy cat, which had silky smooth hair like black velvet. It revealed innocence in its eyes. I really love animals and I keep many pets at my home. I patted its head. It showed its happiness by swinging its tail. It was pathetic to watch the little black cat looking for food in the rubbish bin. I guessed this cat must be a pet of someone’s because of the collar on its neck. It seemed to have lost its owner. I decided to help the black cat.

“Hey, Emma, I am going to help this poor little thing! Would you like to follow me?” I asked.

“I hate animals…” She hesitated and showed disgust. “Okay, I’ll go with you. I am afraid you will be involved in an accident.” She changed her decision.

I felt so grateful to Emma. The black cat seemed to know something and it led us to go to a place. We followed it.
We stopped in front of a cave. The cat ran quickly inside it. I was so confused and hesitated as to whether to go into it or not. Emma urged me to follow the cat. “That must be a great adventure!” She was thrilled by it. I took a breath and calmed myself down.

I finally stepped into the cave under Emma’s intense encouragement. Inside it was so dark and I couldn’t even see my fingers. I could only see Emma’s blue eyes. Her eyes showed her bravery that eased my worry. My palms were sweating and I felt extremely nervous. I held Emma’s hand tightly. The air was full of moisture. My skin stuck to my clothes. It was so cold that it made me shiver. The ground was full of wet mud and I could hardly walk. I scuffled my feet on the ground. Many rats and insects were scuffling around, too. The stink of putrid meat reached my nose instantly, so I pinched my nose with my fingers. I could hear the sound of water drops.

Something was sparkling in the darkness, like stars in the night sky. There was a big difference between these stars and those I usually saw at nights. These stars were cold and made me feel uncomfortable.

Suddenly, the stars blinked. I was startled and I retreated a few steps, wanting to leave this strange place. Unfortunately, I slipped and fell over with a big bang. I was scared of the blinking stars and they got angry…

No! They were bats! They flew towards me and I was soon submerged by hundreds of them. I couldn’t see. I couldn’t hear. I couldn’t breathe… … “Help…” I shouted. I could hear Emma calling my name. Her voice faded away….
In 1789, the French Revolution broke out. The angry peasants joined together to form the civilian revolution army against the French monarchy. By 1792, they had already defeated the French army and conquered the capital city, Paris. The leader of the French royal army, Nick, was leading the soldiers and protecting King Louis XVI.

The revolution army was chasing the tyrant Louis XVI and wanted to send him to the guillotine in order to vent their anger. Therefore, Louis XVI and his royal army went to the beach and planned to flee to England. After crossing a swamp, they stopped for a while and took a rest. They sent a cavalry back to the swamp to check the position of the chasing revolution army but the cavalry did not come back. They waited and waited. Suddenly, they heard Nick shout, “Louis XVI is here! Come and catch him!”

Then, Louis XVI found that they were already surrounded by numerous archers and cavalry of the revolution army.

“Why do you betray me?” Louis XVI asked Nick. “I have trusted you whole-heartedly!”

Nick did not make a reply. Then Louis XVI was caught and sent to prison straight away.

Louis XVI and his army were locked in prison. He sat on the floor, looking at the dilapidated, dirty cell. A prison guard walked towards him and laughed at him, “Ha! Ha! Ha! You poor king! Do you know that you are going to be sent to the guillotine the day after tomorrow?”

Feeling scared, Louis XVI trembled in the corner of the cell. Suddenly, he heard a shrill cry. Then he saw Nick taking the key from the dead guard (that Nick had just killed) and opened the door for Louis XVI and his army.
“Sorry, my Majesty. Sorry for betraying you in the forest. I have been doing this to make them let their defences down. They are having a celebration at the moment and now is the perfect chance for you to escape to England,” Nick apologized. “I have prepared the ship for you at the beach. I have also stolen some weapons and horses from the barracks and stables. What we have to do is just to cross the forest and reach the beach. Let’s go!” He explained.

Louis XVI, Nick and the royal army rode on the horses they had stolen and escaped. While they were crossing the forest, an arrow shot Nick in the leg. Hit by the arrow, Nick knelt down. He looked back, and saw a small troop of archers of the revolution army.

“Nick, we know you are very loyal to the king, so we do not believe in you anymore!” The leader of the archers said.

Nick withdrew his sword, stood up and ordered, “The royal army! Prepare for the battle! My king, the beach is not far from here. Run and get on the ship. Take care of yourself!”

Nick led the royal army to fight the archers and Louis XVI made his way towards the beach. All the soldiers from the revolution army and the royal army were killed. In the battle, Nick sat down near a tree. Having shot by a poisoned arrow, Nick’s wound ulcerated. He felt weaker and weaker. Knowing that his death was drawing near, he smiled to himself, “How glorious it is for me to fight for my country! I have sacrificed myself to save my king’s life.”

Slowly he closed his eyes and waited to be brought to Heaven.

Louis XVI reached the beach at last. He got on the ship and fled to England finally. As he left France to England, he was going to start his new journey...
A Story of a Hero Who Managed to Stop the Hijackers
Billy Cheng  3B

Paul put one dollar into the vending machine and pressed the button ‘Coke’. When he had finished drinking the coke, he left the can on the chair in Terminal 1.

Paul hurried to Terminal 5 because it was already the boarding time for his London flight. Fortunately, he reached the gate before it was closed. He took a free newspaper on the boarding bridge.

In the newspaper, the headline read, ‘Convict Escaped on His Way to Jail’.

The plane was on the runway about to take off. After the plane had left the ground, the lights in the cabin went out and the passengers started sleeping.

Suddenly, two men stood up. Each of them was holding a machine gun. One of the men was bald and had red eyes. The other man was tall and had a broad shoulder. His face was round with a green beard.

They rushed into the cockpit of the plane and held the pilots hostage. The plane was hijacked!

Everyone was worried and nervous. The babies cried but their parents silenced them by covering their mouths.

Paul took out the newspaper from his bag and realized that the photos of the convicts were the exact faces of the two hijackers on the plane. The hijackers told all the passengers that they had to fly to Iran.
While one of the hijackers was walking around the cabin checking if any passenger would try to call for help, Paul suddenly stood up and knocked down the bald hijacker with a lunch tray. The hijacker fainted and Paul seized his machine gun. Then, he carefully walked to the cockpit and quietly opened the door. He then hit the red-eyed hijacker with his lunch tray again. After that, he helped the two pilots to call for help.

Eventually, the pilots landed safely at the nearest airport and the two hijackers were arrested soon after landing. Paul was hailed as the hero of his country.
Starry Starry Night
Jenny Li  3B

Dear Cheryl,

Hey! How are you my friend? Sorry for not contacting you during the holidays. What have you been doing lately? Let me tell you what happened to me over the holidays. You wouldn't believe it!

Last week, I went to Australia to visit my uncle and my brother. Uncle Joe is a really kind and friendly person. He invited us to take a rest at his comfortable house after the long flight and after that, we took a ride in his car. The view of Melbourne’s countryside was amazing and fantastic. I was totally impressed with its charm. I eventually understood why my brother wanted to stay here so much! I had the same feeling too!

Everything was peaceful and perfect. Ahead was a diamond-blue sky, with fluffy pure white ‘marshmallows ’ floating around, constantly changing their shape. The sunlight was spread warmly to every corner. Beyond was an ocean of green, with cows moving and flowers shimmering. The mooing sound echoed with the birds’ twittering song. What a sweet melody! What a splendid and enchanting scene!

Time went by. The sun soon disappeared and the beautiful full moon took its place. After the delicious supper cooked by my Aunt May, I walked to the garden and gazed at the cloudless sky. The moon glittered and shone like an enormous mirror. It reflected all my pleasant memories. The twinkling stars besides it soon attracted my sight. They were sparkling like jewels. There were emeralds, rubies, amethysts, topazes, jades, pearls and carbuncles. All were neatly attached to the velvet, violet sky. The calm and gentle breeze blew towards me, like a mother’s hand softly touching. It was so wonderful that it felt like a dream, a story, and a fantasy.
An extremely bright star blinked at me suddenly. I widened my eyes with surprise. My eyes glinted. Everything was silent. The only sound was made by the ‘conversation’ between the star and me. Then the sky grew darker and darker; the wind blew stronger and stronger; the star shone brighter and brighter; my eyelids became heavier and heavier…

The glaring sunlight shot into my eyes. I couldn’t move. My muscles were aching from head to feet. Everything was pale white here. I suddenly realized that I was lying on a bed. The doctor sitting next to me told me that I was in a hospital. Last night I had slept in the garden. The strong wind caused me to develop the flu! I really had to pay for enjoying the view.

After a few days of staying inside resting, finally I could go out again. The fresh air filled my nostrils. I could smell the grass, the flowers, the stars and the graceful country. I would never forget this experience. If I come here again, I will definitely talk to the stars all night again! Although I was sick from that, I think it was worth it.

It’s your turn to tell me what had happened to you this summer, Cheryl! I am looking forward to your reply!

Cheers,
Jenny
Dear Toby,

How are you? However you may be, I just hope you’re not in as bad a condition as I am. Remember that trek I told you about? Well, I did make it to Egypt from Namibia, but not the way I expected! I’m now in hospital, and I feel really drowsy, though not in pain. I’ve got malaria, which fortunately is relatively minor so I don’t need chemotherapy. And I’ve fractured 3 ribs and my femur.

So I started the hike about 3 months ago, and I’m going to include diary entries to let you have a better idea of what has been going on.

2/3/2009

This is the first day of my trek, and here I am with Stuart, my companion for the next many months. We are going through chronicles of flood plains, grassland, rainforests and deserts. I hope I tumble out of this one safely!

Things were relatively good at first, and the walk was just how I liked it—no roads or grassy hills where you had to struggle hard to get through weeds and thorns. Also, there was a slight cloud cover, and a cool breeze. However, as we left northern Namibia for the safari, with crocodiles, migrating bulls and leopards at every turn, things became less ideal.

28/3/2009

It’s getting very dark, and thanks to these night goggles only, can I spot predators. You know what they say about humans at the top of the food chain—well, it’s clearly not much comfort right now. Rather it’s good to know I’ve got a shotgun at hand. I think Stuart and I will have to take turns to stand guard outside the tent.
We had the closest shave just after my last diary entry. We found about 3 coyotes circling our tent, and of course our shotguns came into place. But the commotion caused many more predators to come and fight for the dead meat. In the end, we left at a great speed and it was a hassle to collapse the tent in a rush.

Going into the hot, damp rainforest meant venturing into an eternal darkness ridden with unknown dangers—man-eating ants and snakes; I mean, pythons, which were what almost killed me. I was asleep when I woke with a start, with a behemoth of a snake slithering on my chest. All I managed was, “Stuart!” before I quickly ran out of air. Stuart grabbed his shotgun and hastily aimed a shot to its head, and as the python slackened its grip and my head spinning like mad, I managed to breathe again.

A searing pain surfaced in my left arm—a lone pellet had gone through, and blood was seeping through the perforation. Stuart helped me bandage it with some snakeskin, and we had a quick dinner of roasted snake—raw meat always attracts unwelcome visitors.

Since that night a very strange thing has happened - I suddenly became possessed by superhuman strength and night vision! It could have been the snakeskin. I might not have survived the jungle had that not happened. Two tigers turned up, baring fangs. I smashed them headlong into each other until they were a fused bloody mess. I could talk to snakes, and with a parade of snakes standing guard for us, no ant nor tiger came to our door again.

I was extremely lucky for the following month.

22/4/2009

Guess what? I can’t believe how I could have missed it during planning—I found a stream going right into the White Nile Dam! So I can rest for a month or so. I’m making Stuart and myself a small roofed raft, and our biggest concern should be piranhas.

But I was less lucky when it came to politics.
12/5/2009

About 30 men carrying assault rifles just beat me up and arrested me for nothing. I don’t know where I am - somewhere called “car torn live mien”, and I don’t know where that is. These African countries usually speak French, but I didn’t recognize what they spoke. I’m in some sort of prison, but how come I’m in prison without a trial?

3 days later things started to get really interesting.

15/5/2009

What the—! My name and photo just appeared on BBC, and I saw a huge crowd protesting for my release! Oh my!

Sure enough, I was released the very next day. I then started the latter part of my hike on the sandy dunes of the Sahara. I learnt that I had been kept in a prison called “Khartoum Lienien” in northern Sudan. I’d been lucky enough to walk into an oasis, so I had sufficient water supplies, but there was a major worry. I couldn’t find Stuart anywhere! Was he still imprisoned by the Khartoum?

Just as I was walking a mere 5 km from the Valley of the Kings, you won’t believe what happened. It was simply incredible! I landed myself in hospital. I assume you know about crescent dunes, they can cause very serious injuries by making you fall off the 60-feet, deceptive (non-existent) backside—same as throwing oneself off a tower. Which was exactly what I did. As I saw white bone sticking out of my leg, mingled with red blood and yellow sand, my mind went oddly blank. And with the sudden blare of neon searchlights, along with cries and shouts, I passed out.

When I finally came around I found myself lying in white linen and in a room which strongly smelled of disinfectant. I realized I must be in a hospital ward of some sort. Seeing that I was awake, a doctor hobbled towards me and said, “Mr. Lee, you are very lucky to be alive. Suddenly, I noticed Stuart in the corner, just as he noticed me too! “Sammy! Sammy! You’re alive!” he tripped on the polished floor in his haste to get to me!
So here I am, 3 days later, writing this letter to you. It was Stuart who found my body on the desert and called the rescue teams! Forgive me for not being able to resist giving you a blow-by-blow account of what had happened. Well, it ends here.

How’s your dog Daisy? Did you persuade the vet not to put Daisy down? It’s such a shame to put to death such lovely animals, and yet I’m amazed how I can still feel sympathetic towards animals after a lot of them tried to bite, chase and strangle me to death!

See you soon!

Yours,
Sammy
Grave Respect

Rafael Law 3B

The warm sun was sinking gradually and the light was turning dark. The whole scene was fading into a black and white photo. It fascinated me indeed.

Ken and I were standing on the pathway looking at the graveyard in front of us. Two trees with bare branches were standing on both sides of the path, just like the guards of these residents. However, no one would dare pass through the arch-like trees.

The wind was bone-chilling and we were both shivering.

Ken was jumping around to get himself warm, although we were both wearing thick clothes and jackets.

“What are you waiting for?” Ken asked with some vapour coming out from his mouth like a spirit.

“Please wait a minute. You’ll soon discover why,” I answered. Another spirit was floating in mid-air.

The leaves of the two trees that had dropped on the ground had piled up. I was quite sure that there would be a rustle if someone, some ‘spirit’ stepped on this crispy carpet, if anyone was there. There was nobody to sweep away the dried grayish leaves.

We were still standing in the same place, rubbing our hands and watching.

There were rows of tombstones standing in the graveyard, which looked like an army saluting their dead solders, or the families giving a tribute to their family members.
The whole area was muted, with neither the birdcall nor the insects’ call. The air seemed frozen. I couldn’t breathe easily. I was sure that the others who had visited or would visit it thought so too.

There were different shaped gravestones, some of them having a cross above them, some of them looking like the stones of the Ten Commandments, and some of them just plain flat boards lying on the ground with their owners under the earth. Most of them were aged and standing in a strange angle. It seemed like they had been defeated by gravity.

There seemed to be the smell of salt diffusing in the air. I guess it was made by the dried tears on the graves.

The gravestones were the storybooks of their owners. The numbers and lines were telling their owners’ stories.

It was the place of invisible Death. Everyone was eventually going to move into here and be a new resident, no matter how much you had, how much you had lost, how famous you were, how unknown you were…

“Well, I think it’s time to go,” Ken said. “We will come back again next week.”

“Okay,” I said, and having paid our due respects we gravely left.
The Blue Beauty
Jenny Li    3B

My face was boiling hot. I opened my eyelids. The strong shiny sparkling sunlight was greeting me. She opened her arms and gave me a welcome hug.

‘Where are we going to?’

‘You will know in a second.’ The driver sitting next to me replied mischievously.

I saw an enormous flower of blue silk lying smoothly on the perfect landscape. My eyes glinted with surprise. ‘Beep’ the car screamed and gleamed. It seemed to be very excited too. I walked on the soft bisque sand. It slipped and slithered into my toes to play.

The sea was dancing, with beautiful waves following the rhythm of the seagulls’ song; the smoke-like clouds were playing hide and seek with me. Seashells were interspersed everywhere. They were the treasure of the blue beauty. What an amazing view to see! I held Tom’s strong hand and walked along the seaside. The water was pushing and whispering to me. Looking at the boy beside me, staying at the aquamarine seaside, I felt like I was in paradise.

The sea was shimmering with charm. We decided to swim in the water. Oh! It was ice-cool. I could smell the summer sea. I could feel that the passion and energy was going all through me. We swam and swam. I thought I saw a dolphin jumping up into the sky. With its diamond eyes fixed on mine, I thought this was a little blue beauty too!

Accidents always find you if you are too happy. While I was following the shadow of the blue beauty, I got lost from Tom. Looking to the right, I could see nothing but the sea. Looking to the left, I could only see a couple of tropical trees. Looking up, the sky was turning dark. Looking down, there was a bottomless ocean…
Something poked me all of a sudden. It was slippery and soft. My eyes widened with shock.

‘Dolphin, is it you?’ I asked with my voice trembling. I thought it nodded and asked me to ride on its back. Lying on a friendly creature like this, I clutched its neck softly and fell deeply into sleep...

My face was colder than ice, paler than chalk. I saw Tom. He was splashing cool water on me.

‘Bell. Did you know how dangerous you behaved? You swam out too far and lost contact with me. Fortunately, he found you in time and carried you back.’ I turned in the direction Tom was pointing. I saw him. He was casually dressed in indigo. I recognized that his eyes were the color of the ocean. He was staring at me, with his sapphire sparkling sight. It was just the same as the dolphin’s eyes. I gasped softly.

‘So, how did you find it, Bell?’ Tom tried to break the silence.

‘It was magic.’ I smiled and replied sweetly. He gazed at me meaningfully. Feminine waves were pushing me. I leaned down and murmured. ‘Do let this miracle happen again.’

Lifting up my head, I gave a goodbye kiss to the twilighting moon. The sea surface was reflecting our shadows. I could see our silhouettes growing smaller and smaller, fainter and fainter and finally disappeared in the moonlight.
It was the worst of time for any ordinary man in the Qing Dynasty. It was the year 1850. A mysterious man in dirty and tatty clothes was digging a hole and putting a chest in a remote area secretly. “I want to do something. Something that can change the fate of the whole country. Although I may fail, I believe that my spirit will influence the others,” he murmured to himself.

Time flew and it was 1998. One day, Jack and Jill had a barbecue in a country park. When they were enjoying the food, their dog John put out the fire suddenly.

“John, what are you doing?” Jack scolded his dog. However, John ignored his master but kept sniffing the soil. This made Jack and Jill curious. As a result, they decided to help John.

“Oh! It must be a treasure chest,” Jill shouted as she saw a part of the chest – like thing. This really surprised them so they went on digging it out of the soil. Finally, they managed to take it out.

Jack and Jill felt excited and they opened the chest carefully. “Oh! I can’t believe that there is a Chinese Bible inside!” Jack yelled. “You see, some notes have been jotted down here. Oh! Here, can you see the signature? It is “Hong Xiu Quan,” Jill exclaimed. “What? Hong Xiu Quan, the leader of the Taiping Rebellion?”

They sent the chest to the Museum of History immediately. After being studied by the historians, the handwriting was proved to be Hong Xiu Quan’s. Jack and Jill felt proud of their contribution to historical research, and they were given a prize of appreciation by the government.

They should thank Hong Xiu Quan, the man who put the chest in the hole in 1850.

*Hong Xiu Quan (洪秀全)*
Dear Edith,

Thanks for your letter. I feel really sorry for you. I understand that suffering from insomnia is irritating since I used to have insomnia a few years ago. It was so disturbing. I’ve got some ideas to improve the situation and would like to solve the problem with you.

I know that you love drinking Coca-cola and you are used to drinking six cans of Coca-cola a day! Drinking Coca-cola is okay, but six cans a day is scary!! There is caffeine in Coca-cola. Too much caffeine will contribute to poor sleep. If you do not stop drinking too much Coca-cola, you will still suffer from insomnia.

Sometimes, poor sleep hygiene will also make you suffer from insomnia. Your family is living in a small flat with only one bedroom. You sleep with your parents and your brother. The flat is too small for four people. As your father snores, the noise will also make you unable to sleep.

To improve the situation, I’ve got some ideas. Although you love drinking Coca-cola so much, you should try to have a “Coca-cola management” scheme. Drink less Coca-cola or drink juice instead. You can also try to drink a cup of warm herbal tea or a glass of warm milk before going to bed.

About your family problem and your father, you may put on earplugs when you are sleeping. Moreover, for the good sake of your father, you should ask him to consult a doctor who can help him to solve his problem of snoring.

I hope that my advice will be helpful. If it doesn’t, you should consult a doctor. I hope I can hear good news in your next letter!

Write back soon!

Best wishes,
Anna
“Eva and I will leave this place tomorrow and we will never come back!” my mom scolded my irresponsible father.

It was a beautiful night as always, with the shining stars and the moon hanging in the sky. Added to my parents' arguing noise, I could hear the cicadas talking in the field. I looked outside from my bedroom window. “I love it here,” I frowned. “I do not want to leave.” I sighed.

I looked at my purplish bedroom which is of my favourite colour. I noticed that the purple colour on the wall was fading …like my parents’ love. I lay on my bed and fell asleep.

A slight light sneaked into my bedroom. I woke up and changed my clothes. The colour of my clothes represented my mood that day. So I chose a black short-sleeved T-shirt, black stockings and a red knitting hat. I stood in front of the mirror. I took a deep breath, made a big smile on my face and opened the door.

“Have your breakfast dear,” my mom said while she was pouring a glass of milk for me. I smiled at her. “Thanks mom.” I took a newspaper from the table to read. In fact, I used it only as a prop. I peeked at mom. She looked tired and I could see that she had her back turned to dad. Then I peeked at dad. He was reading the newspaper and acted like everything was normal. I wished that he would say something to plead us to stay but I did not think it would come true.

I could not stand the silence so I went out into the field.

It had started to change its clothes. Some of the trees had changed to a brownish red from the spring green. They were still gorgeous. Birds were singing on the trees, a beetle was crawling on a leaf like it was an accessory for it, leaves were falling from the trees… I love nature because it would never make me bored.
She is a friend of mine. I talk to her and she answers me through the winds’ breeze. I can find her when my parents argue because of me again, when my schoolmates say that I am a freak again, when I fail my exams again…

I closed my eyes and tried to stop thinking of these things. I sat on the grass and breathed the fresh air. It tasted really sweet.

“We will leave here. We may never come back. We may not see each other again.” I told her. The wind blew. I heard lots of leaves falling. She didn’t want me to leave. “I know, I know. I don’t want to leave either…” I sobbed.

I walked away, knowing that the door was closing on the past. A new chapter in my life was about to begin… I began to feel hopeful.
The sky was blue. The sky was wonderful. However, this blue sky would not appear again in my lifetime.

It was the season of vitality, a sunny Sunday morning, Winnie and I went to the countryside. There were lovely flowers dressed in their princess suits. The grass was painted in its charming spring green. The butterflies danced happily in this harmonic environment. Colourful birds sang loudly in their concert whilst the light breeze comforted me gently with its arm. The smiling sun greeted me with a warm hello.

We walked very slowly to enjoy this wonderful moment. We reached the top of the mountain then we took a rest. We lay down on the grass and looked up at the sky.

The sky was the stage for the clouds. The clouds were good actors. They changed their characters and expressions quickly. Sometimes they were sweet candy, sometimes angry. We closed our eyes and took a deep breath. It was just like we were in paradise.

A pure white rabbit ran across us, which made me think of “Alice in Wonderland”. A bird flew on to Winnie’s hand, like those sweet birds that helped Cinderella. Everything was as pretty as a fairy tale. We talked a lot about our unforgettable memories since we were little children. Each scene appeared in the blue sky. We recollected the pleasant memories of them one by one, cherishing the memories of our childhood.

Suddenly, the fairy tale twisted. Winnie told me the bad news. She would move to Australia the next year. I was so depressed. I cried. Winnie hugged me.

“I promise you I will come back after five years. We will watch the blue sky together again.”
“Yeah! Remember what you have promised me and we’ll be best friends forever!”

Unfortunately, Winnie broke her promise. Five years later, she came back to Hong Kong. I was so excited and just couldn’t wait to see her! Her mother invited me to have dinner with them. I rushed to the appointed restaurant. Winnie didn't recognize me.

“Winnie! I'm Crystal. Do remember me? I was your best friend in Hong Kong.”

“Who… who are you?”

My heart was broken. I could not say anything. My tears ran down my nose, down my neck. After that, Winnie’s mother explained that Winnie had a car accident in Australia and she had lost all her memory. She had forgotten me. I looked at the face that used to be so familiar. The shining smile, the almond eyes and the smooth hair had all disappeared. The sporty girl had become quiet and still. It was not Winnie.

The next weekend, I went to the countryside again by myself. The flowers were not lovely anymore. The grass was not green anymore. The dancing butterflies and singing bird were hiding. The light breeze turned to a strong wind and the sun cried sadly. The sky was blue no longer.
The Sounds of Death

Terry Wong  3C

I was awakened by the tremendous sound far away. I looked at the clock beside my bed. It was 1:00 a.m. I crept languidly to the smeared windows of my room and looked outside. The wind was blowing gently. The sky was clear and stars were blinking at me while the moon was hiding behind some cotton. Everything seemed “normal”.

Suddenly, the street was filled with rats and insects escaping from their holes and ditches. I thought it was strange but I was too tired so I went back to my bed and tried to sleep again.

When I closed my eyes, the ground suddenly started shaking. I was wondering what was happening. Earthquake? I tried to sit on my bed but I couldn’t. I fell down onto the floor. ‘Bang!’ Things were falling down from everywhere. The books on the bookshelves fell down and hit me. I could hear yelling and shouting sound from the room next to me where my parents were. Worrying about them, I tried to stand up on the floor so I could go to them but the earthquake hadn’t stopped and I could not balance my body. I fell down again. After ten more seconds, the rumbling finally stopped.

“Pop!” The electricity was cut off unexpectedly and my room went dark. The house was like a maze. The pictures on the wall and the glass lights had dropped on the ground and made loud noises.

I ran to my parents’ room to see if they were fine. When I pulled open the door, there were some strange sounds coming from the roof of my house. The house suddenly collapsed! My house was asunder and I was covered by the debris. My foot was jammed. Many small pieces kept rolling down and nearly covered my face.

Suddenly, an enormous rock rolled down. I was besieged by the rock but the rock provided me with a little space to breath. It was then complete darkness and extreme quiet. I could even hear my heart pulsating rapidly. I
tried to shout for help as loudly as I could. It seemed that no one could hear me. I kept shouting until my voice was hoarse. I was in despair. My eyes were getting heavier and heavier. I fainted.

I was awoken by a stream of light from a gap. I heard the voice shouting behind the rock, “Is anyone here?”

I tried my best to answer it but my voice was muffled.

“Yes! Help me please!”

“Hang on! We have come to help. We will try to move the rock,” the voice replied. After that I heard many crunching sounds. After a while, the rescue team freed me from the rock and put me on a stretcher. I was safe!

I was immediately sent to hospital by a helicopter. I was so lucky that I was alive.

That day was my most unforgettable day in my life.
Never Judge People Solely on Appearance

Jason Lai  3D

When you first see my friend, Michael, you will probably tell me to stay away from him because of his “Punk” look. However, he is actually a good and kind-hearted person who is always ready to give a helping hand.

One day, I invited Michael to my home. When my mum saw him, she was furious and shouted, “You are such a bad guy, stay away from my son and get out of here!” I was so embarrassed that I asked him to leave with me immediately. To be fair, his nose ring, untidy hair and the heavy metal chain on his jacket would really frighten people who did not know him.

After leaving my home, Michael suggested going to the cinema. On the way, we saw a man who was crossing the road. The man was not paying attention to the traffic because he was listening to his I-Pod. His eyes were closed when a car was coming to him. “Bang!!” and “Arrr!!”, he was knocked down by the car.

Many people witnessed the accident but no one helped the man. Michael ran to the injured man instantly. He covered the man with his jacket and asked him to relax. Then he asked me to call the police.

Worrying about me, my mum followed us to the street so she saw everything Michael did. She was impressed and she changed her mind. After the ambulance had sent the injured man to the hospital, mum walked towards us. “Oh, Michael! I am sorry! I misunderstood you. I thought that you were a bad person but now I realize that I was wrong. Please forgive me. I’m sorry that I’ve hurt your feelings. Please take care of my son and be his friend,” my mum said apologetically. “Never mind, a lot of people misunderstood me. But now, they are my friends. Right, Jason?” Michael grinned at me.
Dear Edith,

Thanks for your letter. I am deeply saddened by your problem and I feel really sorry for you. I understand that insomnia will bring about a lot of inconvenience and problems. I think I can help you because I have had the same experience.

First of all, you should change your lifestyle. You often play computer games until you feel very tired before you go to sleep. However, your brain cannot immediately adjust to the changes of images. When you lie on your bed, the images of the games still appear in your mind, so you cannot sleep because you still feel excited with the games. Therefore, you should stop playing computer games one hour before you go to bed.

Another reason leading to insomnia is noise. I know that you like to listen to pop music when you are sleeping. However, a quiet environment is necessary for quality sleep. When you are listening to music, your brain cannot take a rest. Hence, I suggest you turn off your I-Pod before going to bed.

Cheer up and try to follow my suggestions. I hope you will have a sweet dream tonight. You are always welcome to write to me. However, if the problem gets more serious, you should see a doctor.

Best wishes,
Joseph
A Horrible Tropical Rainforest

Brian Wong      3D

It was very dark at midnight. It was hard to see where I was. It was hot and I was sweating, searching for the road to escape from here. I smelt the perfumed trees. I touched the wet, sticky ground. I saw some crickets and scorpions around me. It was disgusting! I saw some poisoned plants beside the trees when I was walking forward. This spooky, strange tropical rainforest was like hell.

After I had walked forward about fifty miles, suddenly I saw an old man in front of me. He had a horrible face. His blood red eyes were staring at me viciously and his mouth was as big as an apple. His skin was rotten and he was wearing amber-coloured clothes.

“How can I escape from here?” I asked.

Pointing to the north, he didn’t say anything.

“How can I escape from here?” I asked again with a louder voice.

“Go there!” he said with a voice like a lion.

After he had said those terrible words, I heard thunder. Then, it started to rain. I saw an unknown creature like a dinosaur rushing towards us. It had three sapphire eyes, an extremely big mouth and an ear without any nose. Its body was full of soil and dust. I was shocked. I was scared. I wanted to run backwards but the strange old man stopped me.

The “dinosaur creature” was running to us. The old man made a sign which meant we would fight with it. I stood behind the old man but he was still standing there calmly. I was very nervous so my heart was beating like a hammer. Jumping at the “dinosaur creature”, he spewed some snowy spit onto
its body. After a few seconds. It roared and fell down. I was surprised his spit could make the “dinosaur” die.

The strange man led me away from hell. Before we said goodbye, I thanked him for his protection. He gave me a crystal ball which was made of an unknown substance as a souvenir. Then, I left but with the horrid memories following me.
“You are such a foolish girl, with your lemon chiffon hair untidily growing above your garbage brain!”

I lie on the spring green grass which is a bit wet because of the tears from the clouds a thousand miles away from me, which can still feel my sorrow. I can see a girl being bullied by some kids in my mind. I can hear that rude sentence over and over in my mind too.

The girl is tiny, with long lemon chiffon hair reaching her shoulders. She has an egg-shaped face, blue eyes, a small mouth and zipped lips. Wearing coarse clothing and a pair of cheese holes shoes, she is being kicked by some kids her age, who are wearing golden earrings and such shining jewellery. The tiny girl is kicked and punched. Her hair is extremely untidy - also there are wounds on her limbs.

She can hardly breathe and keeps shivering because of her fear but she never asks the others to stop teasing and bullying her. She is an ant. An ant which has been surrounded by puddles, walking nervously and helplessly; no others are going to help her. And the girl is… Yes, it’s me.

I have been teased by my “good” classmates since last year. I suffer from their laughter everyday. But today, I suffer much more than before. I don’t know why. I am sad. I am sullen. I am somber. Being bullied is my destiny, I think. I lie on the grass for some time a river of tears keeps rolling down my cheeks. They are bitter.

Later on, a foul smell runs into my long sharp nose, and soon there comes the most disgusting sound. “Woof, woof, woof!” A dog keeps barking with anger like thunder roaring. Although I have closed my eyes, I know that the dog is just three meters away from me. And the dog, is the animal which I dislike and fear the most. I run. I run as fast as I can. Without noticing, I run
into a dark forest. There is not a line of light to guide me, but I can still hear the furious bark of the dog. So I keep running.

Trees around me are huge ...gigantic! The rustling of the dried leaves is what I can hear besides my beating heart. The dog’s bark keeps on. I run much faster. Trees pass quickly. And from the corner of my eyes which are full of tears, I can see most of the trees have maroon trunks and lime green leaves. This color match produces the feeling of danger. They seem to be looking at me with a foxy smile. I feel like I am the main character in a horror film.

I start feeling tired and I soon stop running because the dog’s bark has finally faded out. In front of me is a beautiful place. In the first few moments, I can only look around the surroundings with my half-open eyes because I can’t get used to the light. At last, I can see clearly.

Standing right in front of me is a tall tree, not gigantic, but I can feel it’s carrying a kind of solemn air. It is an old tree, with its chocolate trunk and forest green leaves moving in a lively way. It gives me a feeling of peace. The tree is grinning at me innocently. Old but healthy, the tree has such kind of childish happiness on it. Looking at the tree, I almost forget about being bullied. All around the tree is pale green grass. It is a bit wet too. However, the tears seem to be full of joy instead of sorrow. I taste their tears to share their happiness. They are as sweet as sugar! No more dogs are barking but birds are chirping. Amazing! When I look up to the sky, I can see a crowd of birds flying freely in the golden sky.

Suddenly, I realize something about my hardship. Just like passing through the dark and dangerous forest to find the serenity of this place, so too will I pass the test of bullying: the strength I gain through the experience will lead me to my brilliant future.

I am afraid no longer.
Mr Bubblehead
Aidan Chau 3D

Under the sapphire sky where the golden sun was smiling and the ivory clouds were resting, lay Mr. Bubblehead. Mr. Bubblehead was sunbathing on the beach. His chocolate-like back was sweating and his cheeks were scarlet. Listening to the sound when the silver waves gently touched the creamy sand, Mr. Bubblehead was feeling relaxed.

A gentle breeze, which brought the smell of the sea, smoothly touched Mr. Bubblehead and the trees. The leaves danced. The sand hissed. Mr. Bubblehead’s heart was now as calm as the turquoise water, which reflected the sunlight.

All of a sudden, a hard-baked coconut hit his head.

Mr. Bubblehead slowly sat up, soothing his aching head and yelled, ‘What’s that!’ He looked around and recognized the khaki coconut lying on the sand. Picking it up, he looked and discovered that a little monkey was laughing at him.

The monkey was coffee in colour. It had a long tail like a rope. Its eyes sparkled like emeralds and its laughing sound was like the song of birds. Thinking the monkey cute, Mr. Bubblehead took out his camera in order to take some photos.

The monkey curiously peered at the camera, a thing that it had never ever seen. Unexpectedly, the camera flashed out a strong light- to the little monkey, the light symbolized the end of the world as it had never seen the light flashing before.

Picking up a coconut, the little monkey fired it. The coconut, like a bullet, hit the camera with perfect accuracy. The camera gave out a loud bang and broke into pieces.
‘You devil! How dare you break my camera?’ Mr. Bubblehead roared. There was fire in both his eyes.

Picking up the two coconuts, Mr. Bubblehead shot them back at the monkey but missed. The monkey gave out a giggle and shot more coconuts towards Mr. Bubblehead.

Mr. Bubblehead’s face paled and rushed towards the coconut tree hysterically. He climbed on it awkwardly in an attempt to catch the monkey. The monkey was still giggling about how stupid Mr. Bubblehead was. Mr. Bubblehead, however, was like a predator, ready for his prey.

Reaching the monkey, Mr. Bubblehead lifted out his hand, wanting to grab it. But still, he missed his chance. The monkey picked up the last coconut off the tree, aiming at Mr. Bubblehead’s head and grinned…

Under the scarlet sky where the golden ball was setting, there lay Mr. Bubblehead. He had been hit by the coconut and fallen down from the tree. Watching the golden sunset, Mr. Bubblehead’s shame was slowly drifting away. The amber sun and the vermilion sky was a hypnotist which made Mr. Bubblehead gradually fallen asleep.
The Worst Day in Michael Phelps’ life
Hailey Lau 3D

It was a day with perfect weather. I was awoken by an alarm. I kicked the blanket away and drew the curtain aside. I looked through the clear window. There was a big, red ball hanging in the sky, smiling at me and greeting the ivory, cotton clouds. It seemed like many sheep were running happily in the sky.

I was excited because I was going to the beach with my best friend, Michael Phelps. Phelps has a pair of large, light-blue eyes and a friendly smile which always hangs on his handsome face. He is a friendly and reliable friend. Unfortunately, his mother died when he was very small. The only thing that she left for Phelps was a ring. Phelps wore the ring every day. His classmates always laughed at him because his arms are longer than usual. They said he was a gorilla. It was really impolite and I felt sorry for him. He liked swimming a lot so we decided to go to the beach and enjoy ourselves.

We finally arrived at the beach. The sandy brown sand, the spring green tree and the steel blue sea made a perfect picture. It was just like a picture which had been painted by a famous painter. We breathed and found that it was salty. It seemed like salt was on our lips too. We went into the water.

"It is cool!" said Phelps with joy.

The sea was peaceful and the waves were gentle and feminine. We attended the submerging activity. We were excited to see the pretty and lively fish flying around and hiding behind the colorful corals. We gave them some bread. They were happy and seemed like they were saying “Thank you “to us.

“Phew!” Suddenly, a huge wave came fiercely like a lion which was very hungry. I was pushed down. Phelps scooped me up. I turned around. Another wave came! We tried to escape but we couldn’t. We were in the deepest part of the darkslateblue ocean.
“There is a Tsunami!” cried the lifeguard loudly.

Both of us were frightened. Our faces became masks of terror. The waves came again and again. They were larger and more like giants. We hugged each other tightly to defeat the villains. Being covered by waves, I could hardly breathe.

I was not good at swimming but Phelps was. We found a tree which had no leaves in the middle of the sea. We tried our best to climb up the tree. Phelps shouted for help and I passed out after drinking too much seawater.

After a few hours, a helicopter found us in the middle of the sea. They saved us. Suddenly, Phelps found that his meaningful ring had disappeared. He felt anxious and he dived into the sea again. He sat on the dirty beach which was full of rubbish and looked at the sea with a pale face. Some sea creatures were crying sadly with Phelps. His heart was torn into pieces. I tried to cheer him up.

It is ten years later and Phelps has become a strong man. He has a special habit: every day, he goes swimming in the sea to look for the meaningful ring which was given by his mum. Because of this, he has become one of the most famous swimmers in the world. He thinks he will find the ring one day. I am proud of my friend, Phelps.
It was a special day in December. The cold wind slightly moved the sand. I lay on the peaceful beach. I drew deep breaths. The fresh air was running into my nose with joy. The aroma of barbeque food came from the restaurant nearby. The waves were singing a song with a constant melody. The wind touched me gently like my mother. I felt free and easy as if floating in the sky.

I opened my eyes! I turned right to look at Emily, who was my best friend. She smiled at me. Her eyes were shining which made me feel delighted. On my left, there was Doris, my lovely dog. She was a Maltese with white hair and attractive black eyes. She was cute. I have never got angry with her even when she did things wrong. She was wagging her tail which made me feel gratified.

“Look at the sky!” Emily called out in a surprised voice.

I turned around and looked at the sky. The unlimited reddish purple sky was in front of me. The sun was going back home like a deep orange turtle. This was the most amazing picture that I had ever seen.

“What a wonderful world! I have wanted to see this beautiful picture for a long time!” I said joyfully.

“Yes. It is fantastic!” answered Emily, who glued her eyes to the picture.

I opened my arms. I wanted to embrace the sky. I just wanted to stop time and enjoy this moment. I wanted to live here forever.

Suddenly, little crabs came out from the holes in the sand, walking laterally in different directions. Doris ran quickly to leave the beach. Emily and I then chased her to stop her. At first, I thought it was because she was afraid of the crabs, but it wasn’t!
All of a sudden, the waves grew taller and taller, and sounded like loud rock music. Everyone was screaming in synchronicity. The water giants which were as tall as buildings and had muscles on every single part of their bodies were coming towards us. I looked at Emily’s anxious eyes. We ran as fast as we could to get rid of the giants. My heart was beating like a drum.

When I turned around and had a glimpse, I stood flabbergasted. The trees were bowing to me with tears on their faces. Some people were rushing to find a safe place, and some of them were being drawn into the sea. A tear dropped from my eyes. I knew we were going to be eaten very soon.

The water whipped our bodies and drew us into the sea. I used all my energy to struggle against the sea. I saw that Emily was following the water movement. She seemed to be unconscious. And I could not see Doris! I stopped struggling…

Fortunately for me, I was saved by another giant, a good one this time, who grabbed my weak body and carried me to dry land. Very sadly, my friends were not so fortunate…
“Ouch! Where am I? Ain’t I in my room? Let me see… Oh It’s the Wonderland! Let’s go and look for the Time Rabbit!”

My name is Alice, and I am 14 years old. Have you read the story “Alice’s Adventure in Wonderland”? I am the main character of the story. The last time I came here was about 5 years ago. I met the White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter and the Dormouse, and I had a great time. Now, I am back.

“Excuse me, do you know where the White Rabbit is?” I asked a black rabbit.

“There’s no such rabbit called the White Rabbit. There’s only me, the Black Rabbit,” answered the Black Rabbit.

“What? So, where is the Dormouse?”

“There’s only a cat called the Awakemouse.”

“Okay. Thank you, Mr. Black Rabbit.”

“Where is the White Rabbit? Where is the Dormouse? Where are my old friends? Okay, calm down, Alice. I’ll look for the Mad Hatter to find out the answer,” I thought to myself.

While I was walking, I felt cold and suspicious. Everything here was in black and white. When I arrived at the garden, I only saw a clown.

“Excuse me. May I ask where the Mad Hatter is?” I asked.
“Do you mean the Mad Clown? I am the Mad Clown. There’s no one called the Mad Hatter,” he replied.

What had happened? I screamed in my heart. Why was everything different? It should not be like this. I had to get out of here. I had to find out what had really happened. So, I had to look for the Queen of Hearts.

I walked to the castle. It was black in colour, not in white. I felt alarmed. I walked inside but I did not see the Knave of Hearts. I only saw the Knave of Cubes. There was no Queen of Hearts but the Queen of Cubes.

“Could you tell me what’s happened here, your Majesty? Everything is different here. Where is the White Rabbit? Where are the Dormouse and the Mad Hatter?” I asked.

“I don’t know what you are talking about. Here is the Mirror Kingdom, not the Wonderland, little girl,” the Queen of Cubes answered.

“The….the Mirror Kingdom?”

“Yes! Everything in the Mirror Kingdom is totally different from the Wonderland.”

“So where is the exit, your Majesty? How can I go to the Wonderland?”

I walked out of the castle, and I felt hopeless and helpless. Everything here was dark and sad. I hated everything here.

“Hello, Alice. Long time no see!”

“Cheshire Cat! Why are you here? Do you know how to get out of here?” I asked.
“I’m sorry, Alice, but there is no exit,” Cheshire Cat replied.

“So how did you come here?”

“I have my own way, Alice. If you really want to leave here, you can jump down that hole – the Underground Playground, the Elysium!”

“Really?”

“Well, yes, I think.”

“Thank you, Cheshire Cat. I will go there,” I said.

“Goodbye, Alice, and never will we meet again….”

I walked towards the big hole and looked down. There were many colourful spotlights. Stars were twinkling and the moon was shining in the sky. I was very excited. Immediately, I jumped down into the abyss, and I heard someone screaming. Suddenly, everything in front of me went dark. Then, I lost my consciousness…

Hurray! I was out of the Mirror Kingdom!
The Advantages and Disadvantages of Using IT in Education

Karen Cheung 3E

We are surrounded by computers every day and everywhere. In school, there is lots of IT equipment for teaching and learning, such as smartboards, projectors and the latest computers. Are all of them important or necessary in education? Let’s discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using IT in education.

One clear advantage of using IT is that it makes our school life more convenient. By placing the Octopus card onto the kiosk, students can buy snacks, drinks and even purchase stationery items in no time. It saves the students a lot of time.

The second advantage is that IT also helps to reduce the use of paper. If we hand in our homework through the school assessment system on the Internet while teachers send their teaching materials and notes to us through email, we can save a lot of paper. It helps to make our school more environmentally friendly.

There are doubtlessly a number of advantages of using IT in education. On the other hand, there are also a number of disadvantages.

One disadvantage is that it causes many technical problems that take time to fix. Setting up the equipment takes a lot of time, and if the machines break down, it also takes a lot of time to fix them. Students’ learning time is very limited so when the computers or IT equipment break down frequently, it will seriously affect the progress of students’ learning.

Another disadvantage is that using IT is very costly because we often need to update the software or programmes in our computers, and keep replacing the computer hardware with the most updated one, as well as to pay for the high maintenance fees. The money spent on the IT facilities could have
well been spent on other things such as reducing class sizes or buying more books for the library.

To conclude, there are many advantages and disadvantages of using IT in education. However, the use of IT motivates me to learn and arouses my interest in a lot of subjects. Therefore, I fully support the use of IT in education.
Dear Mary,

Hi! Did you enjoy your holiday? I know you have just been to Thailand sightseeing. Did you have an amazing experience? Or like me, have a frightening and an unforgettable experience? I still feel anxious when I think about it!

Originally, I went to Thailand to enjoy the sunshine and beach there. It was a wonderful place. There was wind from the sea which blew gently and touched my face. There was golden sand all over the beach. The water was so clean that I could see the stones under the water clearly! When I saw this breathtaking environment, I couldn’t stop running into the sea and swimming! However, this joyful time didn’t last for a long time.

Suddenly, my legs got cramp and I couldn’t swim. I screamed out as loudly as I could as I felt I was drowning in the sea. Before I became unconscious, I saw someone swimming towards me.

I was rescued and was laid on the beach. Sounds were surrounding me. Suddenly, the middle of my chest was being pressed by someone. Then something which was hard, rough and sharp was put around my mouth. “What’s that?” I tried to guess. When I was thinking, cheering and yelling were everywhere. A man who was slovenly and had a big belly appeared in front of me. There was a hard, rough and sharp beard on his face, too. I couldn’t believe that my first kiss was given by him!

Although I was disgusted with his beard, I thanked him sincerely for rescuing me. I will never forget his kindness. After I had thanked him, he replied with a big grin and said, “You are welcome!” I promised him I would be more careful next time and said goodbye to him.

Have you had any unforgettable experience which is as “exciting” as mine? Please share it with me! I am looking forward to hearing about your adventure! Write back soon.

Love,
Candace
An Unexpected Experience
Carmen Hui  3E

26th September, 2009

Dear Selena,

Hi pal! How are you? I was glad to hear from ya! When I got your letter yesterday, I was highly delighted and joyful. Do you know that I was so eager to hear from you? By the way, I am sorry to hear that you and your whole family have the swine flu. It is terrible, isn't it? I hope all of you will get well soon. Anyway, I am writing to share something with you. I am sure that you won't believe it!

Last month, I travelled to Los Angeles to enjoy my holidays. I went to the amusement parks, some scenic spots and several historic places. It was fascinating! I couldn’t stop my eyes glinting! I will send you some photos that I took during my journey later on. Oh! I almost forgot to mention the shopping malls in L.A.! They are spacious and have a variety of shops inside. What marvelous shopping malls! I still remember the day I went shopping, I was entirely crazy and I couldn’t stop buying stuff. Anyway, my journey started perfectly as everything happened according to my thoughts. However, bad luck befell me soon afterwards.

One day, after my visit to China Town, I was abnormally tired. Yet, I didn’t take it seriously because I thought that I was just exhausted and I just needed a rest. Unfortunately, the next morning, I had a splitting headache and fever. My mum said I probably had got influenza. You know what? My head was nearly cracked and my temperature could almost fry an egg! I couldn’t move either as my muscles were aching. Therefore, I had to stay in the hotel all day. That was utterly boring!

Nevertheless, that wasn’t the worst. When I got back to Hong Kong, I was still suffering from the flu. I went to see the doctor straightaway. Guess what? The doctor told me that I was infected with the swine flu virus! Can you believe
that? When I heard it, my eyes blinked with disbelief and my jaw dropped. Was that a joke or something? How could it happen?

Now, I take the pills everyday and I wear a mask every minute except for mealtimes. Also, I have to be in quarantine at home. It is really a hard time for me. As you and I both coincidentally got the swine flu, I can totally understand how you feel right now. Full of pain and fatigued, right? Well, I just want to let you know that no matter what, I will always be there for you.

I would really love to hear from you. Please feel free to write to me, okay? I am looking forward to receiving your letter.

P.S. May God bless you!

Best wishes,
Carmen
The Importance of Staying Healthy

Zibiah Ho  3F

Good morning my fellow classmates,

What is the most important thing in your life? Money? Friends? Happiness? Family? Academic results? After listening to my speech, you may have new insights into your list of priorities.

Do you know the major cause of death? According to a survey conducted by the World Health Organization in December 2004, most people die of sickness such as heart disease or cancer. You may think that sickness is something natural and unavoidable at an old age. However, you are wrong - people are sick only when their immune system is weak. There are always elderly people who still lead healthy and enriching lives after their retirement.

Have you ever heard of a place called Bama? It is a village where most of the residents are over a hundred years old. This is why the village is also called the Long-life Village. A one-hundred-and-eleven-year-old woman living in Bama once shared her secret of longevity, saying that she only consumed healthy food like vegetables and boiled meat. Also, she wakes up at six every morning and sleeps early.

Leading a healthy life is rewarding. If you live a healthy life, you will have more time to spend with your friends and your family members; if you are a healthy adult, you can pursue your interests and fulfil your dreams; if you are healthy when you are old, you are also free to live an exciting life travelling around the world or even participating in all kinds of extreme sports.

That’s right, a healthy body makes all the difference.

My fellow classmates, I am sure everyone wants to live a blissful active life. From now on, let us take better care of our bodies and embrace a happy life.

Thank you.
A Mysterious Night

Jeffrey Ng  
3F

Last night, I went to bed early. I was so tired that I fell fast asleep. Suddenly, a horrible scream woke me up. The scream seemed to have come from my neighbour!

I was very worried whether my neighbour had got hurt. I ran to her flat in a rush. When I arrived there, the scream had stopped. I rang the bell but my neighbour, Auntie Lucie did not open the door. When I was about to leave, the door creaked open slowly. The lights were off. Tiptoeing into her house, I felt extremely uneasy. Suddenly, I halted, as I felt as if someone was coming closer and closer towards me. I closed my eyes tightly. Having taken a deep breath, I turned around and opened my eyes. The scene was horrifying.

I found myself in the seafront. I was shocked because of what I had seen. The sky was red and foggy. I couldn’t see the skyline clearly. All the lights were out so the road was pitch-dark. At that moment, I saw someone floating in the middle of the sea. She seemed to be Auntie Lucie! However, I was so startled that I couldn’t even utter a word, let alone rescue her. She was sinking slowly. I was so frightened that I couldn’t move my feet. The sea became red with huge waves breaking on the shore. The sea level was escalating. The smell of the seawater was disgusting. My heart was about to jumped out of my throat because I realized that a flood was approaching.

The wave was pushing me so I screamed for help. At last, the chilly water covered the buildings and washed over me. I saw Auntie Lucie again. I wanted to save her. Meanwhile, I saw a raft in front of me and I hesitated. As I was on the horns of a dilemma, the waves washed me away. I couldn’t remember what had happened. I found myself in my bed this morning. My mother told me that Auntie Lucie had died mysteriously. I was sure it wasn’t a dream!

Do you believe in God? If you do, there must also be ghosts in the world.
Happy Halloween

Zibiah Ho  3F

Last night, I went to bed early. I was so tired that I fell fast asleep. Suddenly, a horrible scream woke me up. The scream seemed to have come from my neighbor. I was really exhausted so I ignored the scream and went back to embrace my sweet dream. “Help, help, help!” someone yelled loudly and it woke me up again. I decided to go to my neighbour’s house to have a look.

I knocked on my neighbour’s door and my neighbor, Wendy rushed out squealing. Her face gave me a fright. She was in tears and trembling with fear. “What’s happened?” I asked.

“I broke a vase carelessly and a ghost appeared,” she gasped. I did not believed in ghosts so I walked into her house. It was gloomy and chilly but everything seemed to be normal. Wendy followed me on tip toe.

“Wendy, where is the ghost?” I whispered.

“There, over there, the ghost is behind you!” I turned around and saw a ghost in white approaching me! I was overcome with fear. I wanted to flee for my life but I was so stunned that I could not even move my legs.

“Surprise, Happy Halloween!” the ghost took off his white robe and it was my dad! I was totally dumbfounded. My mum walked towards me with a basket of candies, “Trick or treat?” I realized that it was all a joke.

“We planned this surprise to wish you a happy Halloween. Were you thrilled?” Wendy asked. I was embarrassed and everyone in the house laughed.

I am sure it will be the most unforgettable Halloween in my life!
Dear Mary,

How are you? It’s been a long time since Christmas when I last heard from you. Recently, problems caused by swine flu have become more serious day by day. People are getting more and more cautious about their health. I hope that you are getting enough exercise and rest in order to build up your immune system and stay healthy.

Let me tell you something that happened to me a few weeks ago which was a painful lesson. As you know, I’m full of enthusiasm about dancing. Of all the dance movements, jumps and leaps are my favourites. Whenever I jump high up the air, I feel extremely happy and I forget all my troubles and sadness at that moment.

Last week, when I heard from my ballet instructor that we were going to practice the Grand Jetés (a movement which you leap and split your legs apart in the air) that day, I was so overjoyed that my eyes were dancing with joy. I used all my strength to jump up high in the air and I extended my legs as far as I could. I felt like I was a bird flying freely in the sky and I felt really great. That was the best Grand Jeté I had ever done in my entire life. When my teacher praised me after that, I felt my cheeks blushing and I was so happy that I jumped for joy.

However, bitterness came next. That night, my legs ached a lot and I couldn’t even raise my legs. I could hardly sleep because of my aching muscles. The next day, things became worse. I could hardly walk on flat surfaces or up the stairs. I had to hobble to school. My mother said I was probably suffering from cramp due to exercising too much. She made me skip my hip hop and ballet lessons for a week. That was terrible.
Fortunately, after massaging my legs every night, I felt a lot better after a week. I promised myself not to dance that hard anymore. I couldn’t bare to have that painful experience anymore.

Do you have any similar experiences? I hope that you can share those with me. I’m looking forward to hearing your stories.

Best wishes,
Helen
Dear Dora,

How is your life in England with your family? Is it snowing now? Also, as you know, swine flu is continuing its rapid spread across the world. Please take care of yourself and your family.

What did you do during the summer holiday? As for me, I had a deadly experience… Let me tell you…

I went to the Tibetan Plateau, which is the highest and biggest plateau in the world, to attend the opening ceremony of my mum’s new factory. We first went to Xi-Ling from Hong Kong by air. The flight was nearly five hours. Then, we went to the Tibetan Plateau by the Qing-Zhang railway. It was really a long and tiring trip, but I saw the most fascinating scenery from the train.

The sky there was very sapphire in colour and I imagined I was watching a beautiful painting. Also, the air was very fresh. There were no tall buildings and no pollution. There were many towering mountains dressed in white and I saw the highest mountain ranges in the world - the Himalayas. My eyes danced with joy when I saw the giant with a burly body.

Unfortunately, my luck soon changed. When I was taking photos jauntily, I started feeling dizzy, fatigued and drowsy. Then, mum noticed my face had become a mask of terror. She asked me nervously, “Darling, are you feeling sick?” “Yes…I feel dizzy…” My voice degenerated to a childish whisper. “Oh! Darling, this is Altitude Sickness. This is possibly caused by acute exposure to a low partial pressure of oxygen at high altitude,” mum said worriedly. She then gave me a pill.
called “Acetazolamide” and asked me to wear an oxygen mask. Thank God, I felt better a few minutes later.

However, I still suffered from insomnia and nausea, which were possibly caused by Altitude Sickness, too. On the following nights, I couldn’t sleep and I counted the number of stars. Also, I couldn’t eat very well. I vomited everything I ate. On those days, my body got lanky.

This was a trip intermingled with sorrow and joy. However, I was proud of myself for visiting “the roof of the world”, the gorgeous Potala Palace and the huge Qing-Hai Lake.

I am interested in your holiday and I am looking forward to getting your reply. Keep well!

Cheers,
Stephanie
The breeze caressed my face. Leaves fluttered and I could hear cracking sounds. The amber-colored sunlight squeezed through the creamy cotton wool. I was lying on the silky soft sandy beach, enjoying my breakfast of aromatic freshly-baked bread and coffee. Waves ran peacefully on the turquoise sea. Tasting the palatable food on this Christmas morning with the beautiful sounds and salty sea smell was really like being in paradise. What a fabulous life!

The most amazing thing was the rainbow-colored shells that were left on the coast while the waves went back to the sapphire sea. I went to look at them curiously and was excited. The sea was calm. Everything seemed perfect.

Then I saw an adorable little girl of the same age as me. She had a pair of almond-shaped emerald warm eyes on her angelic face and wavy blonde hair. She wore a long snowy dress. I went near her and she looked at me nicely and from the expression in her eyes, I could feel that she was welcoming me. We played with the magical shells and harmless tiny sea creatures. The little crab went in and out of its home as if it was also excited about the incredible surroundings. I picked it up. It bit my finger! “What a naughty crab!” the little princess said in an innocent tone. We laughed together.

All of a sudden, the sunlight faded away. Both of us exchanged a look of astonishment. The shadows were as dark as sin. Not knowing what was happening, I heard screams and shrieks. I saw faces become masks of terror. I finally twisted my head to see what was forthcoming. A terrible strong water wall!

A chill was running up my spine. My feet were as soft as jelly. I grabbed my new friend’s hand and did my best to run. Everything was out of control and everyone was running frantically, running for their lives.
I was in great fear. I ran faster, but I was not as fast as the rapid wave. I was whirled around by the cruel waves and was falling into the whirlpool almost unconsciously. I didn’t know if I was drowning, or not. The only thing I knew was I was still holding my friend’s hand tightly as if it was my life.

The next thing I knew, I found myself lying on the wet and hard ground. I tried to sit up but was not successful. There was heavy material covering my feet. The sky above was grey and gloomy. I turned my head to the side and saw that the sea on my left had gone back to what it had been before. It was calm. But the surroundings were not. The buildings had vanished and roads to my right seemed damaged. The beautiful beach had disappeared. Life was destroyed. Heaven had turned into hell.

I was yelling in a hysterically hoarse voice, but nobody answered. I saw the one lying beside me was my friend! I tried to find her hand and grabbed it. It was as cold as ice. I shook her hand and shouted to wake her up. She didn’t respond. There was not any movement on her stone-like face. Tears soon ran down my cheeks insensibly...

I wondered if my rescue would take place...
The Young and the Restless
Kelvin Wan  4B

Living standards in Hong Kong are without doubt better than ever. We cannot affirm that the youth of today are spoiled by their parents, but we have to admit that we are very comfortable with our current status.

Throughout the 70s and 80s, the hardship of the materialistic society drove our parents to work days and nights just to earn their living. Unfortunately, the easy atmosphere and environment generated by their hustle prompted us to sit back or worse, fall into the wrong path. Taking a look at ourselves, we do not have to work or suffer. We do not even have to move to grab a can of soda. There is simply no blood, no sweat and no tears in our lives. However, the stark reality is the same as the old-time saying, “no pain, no gain”. Therefore, we definitely need to change and decide our own fate.

All different kinds of problems are emerging around adolescents today, ranging from Internet addiction, bullying, teenage suicide to compensated dating. One of the contributory factors in these problems is that adolescents nowadays are more rebellious and more prone to challenge their parents and the traditional points of view. Besides, peer pressure, family problems, curiosity and certainly a comfortable upbringing are also considered the main culprits.

I want to express my opinion about two particular matters. First is the worsening drug abuse problem. Almost every day when I flip through the newspaper, I can see news surrounding teenage drug abuse. A drug rehabilitation-related group estimates that up to twenty thousand Hong Kong students are taking drugs. I think that staggering number speaks for itself. Drug abuse does not only affect teenagers’ health, it has provoked other problems as well. Young drug addicts are giving drug dealers and traffickers a big hand by paying them and helping them to smuggle drugs. Moreover, teens commit crimes due to their desperate need for drugs, and drug abuse damages the bonds between families and friends.
The second matter I want to talk about is teenage suicide. According to the World Health Organization, suicide is one of the leading causes of death among teenagers and adults under 35. It demonstrates the fact that teenagers today are not strong enough to handle pressure, which emerges from virtually anywhere. In my opinion, the main reason behind the two problems mentioned above is that adolescents want to escape from reality and all the adversities that they are facing.

In order to alter the current situation, co-operation between every party in society is urgently needed. The government can help by making laws that protect and at the same time, correct the teens. For example, officials can stiffen the penalty for drug trafficking and execute the school-based drug testing scheme as soon as possible. The mass media can spread positive messages to them via different channels, giving them concepts about a meaningful life, and the importance of family, etc, instead of promoting unhealthy moral values. Schools can provide a suitable and happy learning environment for students, avoid being too exam-oriented, teach them skills essential for working in society and communicating with others, as well as inject the correct attitudes towards life into their minds. Families should support and love teenagers no matter what, while making sure that they are not led astray. Most important of all, teenagers themselves must realize the importance of living a meaningful life instead of taking everything for granted, and treasure the opportunity to live and learn.

Society will not abandon those who are lost and we will strive to help them to create a harmonious community. If we do not attempt to rectify the current situation, it will deteriorate and the next generation is going to endure a harsh and disastrous upbringing. From now on, let’s start working shoulder to shoulder to tackle all kinds of youth problems and make our world a better place.
Dear Pinter,

How are you? What are you doing now? I think you may be very busy. There are a lot of things to do at school, I am so tired as I study every day for lots of examinations and quizzes. I haven’t seen you for a long time. Soon, there will be a drama in my school. I’d like to invite you to come and watch our performance.

My English teacher asked us to use a drama to explain the importance of relationship and friendship. So, the story will be touching and will surely move you to tears. The drama first started because of the drama festival. It is of the musical genre, you will appreciate it. On the other hand, you will also appreciate the musical performance too. The story is about an earthquake that took place in a poor village. A lot of people were killed, many houses and roads were destroyed. Before the disaster, the residents were so selfish and cocky that they never helped one another. However, they became friendly and helpful since the disaster occurred. Besides the firemen, the other people such as the boss of a store and the teenagers also helped to save the victims. At last, they built a new village with their effort. This drama gives us a message that encouragement and helpfulness are very important. The residents helped one another and always encouraged the tired firemen so that they could recover quickly.

In the drama, I was one of the helpers in the disaster. When I was saving the victims, I would sing songs with the other actors and actresses. In the rehearsals, we supported the backstage by preparing the stage lights, sound effects and the costumes. These are so important. If the director lacks them, he will not be able to produce a good show. Although I was tired and exhausted because of the drama, I have learnt a lot of things about drama. Besides, I made lots of friends in the drama and my cooperation with the other performers has improved, too. I feel contented with this drama and look forward to the performance.
The performance will be held in the school hall at half past five in the afternoon. It is on Friday, so I think you may be available. You shall go to the school hall on time, don’t be late. If the drama has started before you arrive, you’ll need to wait for a long time. So, you shall come to the hall early.

I do hope you can come to watch the drama. After watching the drama, you will be impressed. I am looking forward to your reply. You can call me if you have any questions.

Love,
Beckett
Dear Alex,

How are you? This summer, I took part in a study trip to Mongolia organized by World Vision. I want to share my experience with you.

Taking part in community service programmes is very meaningful. These programmes provide a unique opportunity for participants to interact with the poor and gain a new perspective on their lives. After listening to my experience, I hope that you will join this heartfelt experience with me next time.

In Mongolia, we worked at an orphanage in order to teach the children about first aid and hygiene. We also taught them basic English and Cantonese. It’s very sad to know that some of the orphans have relatives, but they can’t afford to look after their children. However, these children are strong and independent. They do most of the housework themselves such as laundry and the cleaning. They often work on the farm to support the orphanage. When they have time, the children play games on the barren ground near their dormitory.

I was impressed by the positive attitude of the children. I found that even though their relatives and parents had left them, they did not pick up any bad habits such as gambling, alcoholism or taking drugs. On the contrary, they took care of themselves properly. However, during the programme, I could still feel that deep in their hearts, they longed for a warm family. I think we should do our best to show them our care and support.

I know that you are afraid to communicate with those less fortunate people. I think language does not need to be a barrier. In the beginning, it was extremely hard to figure out what they said. However, gradually we could use body language to communicate with them. We should show genuine care from our hearts.

Finally, taking part in the community service programmes can help you to appreciate the abundance that you have, and become motivated to care for the less fortunate people. You can log onto www.worldvision.org to learn more about the programmes organized by World Vision Hong Kong.

Best wishes,
Chris
Dear Editor,

Drug abuse has become more and more serious among adolescents in Hong Kong. Therefore, I am writing to express my opinions on teenage drug abuse and the Hong Kong government’s proposal for voluntary drug testing in schools.

First and foremost, why do teenagers take drugs? I believe teenagers take drugs for similar reasons that adults do.

Teenagers may take drugs because of peer pressure. It is generally believed that teenagers take drugs in order to identify themselves to be part of a group. If they do not, they will be isolated or eliminated from the group.

Besides, it seems to me that teenagers may be depressed or they may have problems at home or at school. Thus, they take drugs to escape from the psychological pain.

I personally feel that it is important for parents to understand the pressure teenagers are encountering and try not to judge them if they find out they have taken drugs. Parents should give teenagers opportunities to express their feelings and be open with them about their concerns. It is necessary to communicate with teenagers. If teenagers feel safe talking to their parents, then their parents will have a better chance of weighing in on their choice of whether or not to take drugs and encourage them to avoid using drugs, or even totally keep away from drugs.

In addition, parents have to be well-behaved because they are teenagers’ role models. If parents behave badly, such as smoking or taking drugs, teenagers will just follow and imitate them. Hence, it is important for parents to begin with their own behaviour.
As teenage drug abuse may cause various social problems, the Hong Kong government has intended to put more capital to promote school-based anti-drug education and to implement the voluntary drug test in schools to combat the problem of teenage drug abuse.

But due to the privacy issue and the personal safety of students, is the drug test in schools appropriate in Hong Kong? As far as I am concerned, this measure may not be appropriate at schools in Hong Kong. In fact, I have heard that there are tricks that can fool the tests and make the entire process fallible. And what is more is that teenagers may not fully cooperate with the government. Therefore, the tests are far from perfect.

All in all, drugs are bad. Keep away from them and you will lead a better life.

Yours faithfully,
Christy Leung
Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my ideas about the typhoon in Taiwan about a month ago. Due to the typhoon, there were a lot of negative effects that came up in the area. At that time in summer, when that day was just like any other day, a fierce storm ruined the land. People were killed and became homeless. It was the reason why we should clear our mind to try to eradicate the problem in Taiwan.

The day after the catastrophe, the country was totally devastated. Nothing was left but only rubbles and dead bodies. We cannot avoid talking about the consequences of the typhoon. First of all, we should start from the economy. Because of the horrible wind and rain, the fields, buildings, shops and villages were totally destroyed, which led to a loss of over a thousand million dollars. The financial system was paralyzed. People got lost in the disaster. For example, there was a man who owned a huge hotel located near the river. Unluckily, due to the strong wind, the whole building collapsed and fell into the water. The man went bankrupt within an hour. It showed how the economy of Taiwan was adversely influenced by the typhoon.

The other point we cannot ignore is the measures taken by the government. Everyone was shocked by the sudden attack of the typhoon. The truth is that president Ma was not on the driver seat. He could not do anything to put a stop to the negative impact but to descend the level of it. If I were the president of Taiwan, I would rebuild the important buildings like hospitals and residential houses as quickly as possible. In addition, I would increase the number of soldiers for the relief work. The way to make this possible is to prescribe the grown-ups to join the rescue teams. Also, I would ask the other countries for help. All of these alternatives could have made the relief work faster.
As we know, president Ma chose to apologize to the public due to his failure in saving more lives. However, there were some uncontrollable conditions that he had missed. First, it was the indignation of the villagers. Not only the villagers, but also the mass media had put pressure onto the president, so his apologies received very poor responses. As the old saying goes, actions speak louder than words. Right now, the people who were in extreme anger even want him to resign.

Perhaps president Ma was shirking his responsibility and shifting the blame onto the community, the mass media and the public. However, what I appreciate was his concern to the Taiwanese people. Maybe it did not help much, but at least it could boost the morale on his people. I believe that Taiwan will recover soon from the damage quickly in a year.

Yours faithfully,
William Lin
Dear Pinter,

How are you? How’s life getting on? We haven’t seen each other for three months now and I miss you so much. I have recently been preparing and rehearsing for a drama. This is my first time of being a director and that’s why I hope I can invite you to come and watch the show. I think it is really a great chance for us to see each other, so I’m going to tell you the details about the performance.

At first, my English teacher asked me to write a story for a competition which was organized by a company and I was so lucky that I won the competition at last, so my teacher decided to use my story and put it on stage in the coming English Festival.

The story is about a pessimistic young lady, Lisa, and an old woman. Last week, when I went to visit my grandfather in hospital, I saw a handicapped man who always worried about himself and kept saying, “When will I die? I don’t want to live anymore. Please let me die.” I was so astonished after listening to what he had said because I didn’t understand why a man who was in his thirties wanted to give up his life. Although he was paralyzed, he could still make a contribution to society. That’s why I decided to write his story. The pessimistic lady has the same attitude as the handicapped man and I want to bring out the message that we should treasure our lives. There are always barriers in our lives; we should not escape from them but face them.

We have spent two months on the rehearsals. Although it was hard, the actors have really tried their best and I think it is a performance which can touch the hearts of all the audience. It was my first time of being a director and I am so nervous about the feedback. The performance will take place in the school hall next Friday. I hope you can come and support me.

As last, if you have time, I really hope to see you next Friday. Let me remind you once more, the drama will start at 5:30pm next Friday in the school hall. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Love,

Beckett
Dear Pinter,

How are you doing? I heard that you had won a literature competition! You had done a good job! As for me, my English teacher has suggested that my class adapt a short story for a drama. I would like to invite you to come and share our joy.

The drama is a tragedy. The story is about a stain fork. There are three main characters in the story. They are Lisa, Wendy and Carol. Lisa is a 40-year-old mother who has been found to have AIDS. She is deeply discouraged since she is unable to take care of her sons and husband and provide the crucial needs for her family. At the same time, she is incapable of working. She can’t earn enough money to put bread on the table. She thinks she is the unluckiest person in the world and is confused all day long in the hospital. One old lady who stays next to her bed is called Wendy, who has a good temper and an optimistic outlook on life, thus she seems not to be bothered by anything. She also enlightens Lisa by telling her stories. Lisa feels better after listening to the stories. Dramatically, Lisa is finally killed by Carol – a rival in love. This is a mysterious drama and is full of suspense. I am sure that you will be impressed by the plot. The director of this drama is me and I will try my best to take charge of it.

We have had rehearsals for ten times and three dress rehearsals too. To organize a drama is challenging and difficult. Imagine that you have to instruct a make-up team, manage the sound effects, control the stage lights, order the costumes and communicate with the scriptwriter continuously. These tasks take a lot of effort. They even cause me insomnia sometimes, but I think this is a valuable chance for me to become more mature. I enjoy being part of it!

Last but not least, our show will take place next Friday at 5:30p.m. in the school hall. I hope that you can join us and I look forward to your reply.

Yours,
Beckett
Should students receive private tuition? The answer to this question cannot be regarded carelessly.

In Hong Kong, private tuition is prevalent and there are tutorial schools everywhere. Shadow education may have major implications for both learning and livelihood. Some students can easily meet the learning demands of the education system without tutoring, but many families still invest in tutoring in order to maintain a competitive edge. At the other end of the ability spectrum, low achievers fear being left behind if they do not receive tutoring.

But I think that students should not engage in shadow education. Private tutoring is not beneficial for students. Out-of-school tutoring affects in-school education. It will decrease students’ motivation for their mainstream classes. Also, these students have less time for other activities. Moreover, shadow education is too expensive and it stirs up arguments over household expenditures, maintains and exacerbates social inequalities, and also exerts unnecessary pressure on children.

Also, lots of students attending tutorial schools cannot pay attention to their teachers in the normal classroom. Some students think that they do not have to concentrate in school lessons. But they are utterly wrong. I think that students receiving shadow education need to keep up with the lessons in school, but not only learn through private tuition.

A psychologist, Dweck, proposed two different kinds of learning goal orientation. Private tutorial schools declare in their courses that they can help students to get high marks in their exams and encourage them to memorise model answers. This is called the performance goal orientation. Research has pointed out that students who are either performance goal oriented or learning goal oriented may all be working hard. But those with a performance goal orientation would rather escape challenges than face them. If they fall, they will not be able to get up again. On the other hand, those with a learning goal
orientation will choose to face trials, and they treat frustration as a learning chance. Although shadow education can help to improve students’ school results, it cannot encourage students to cope with adversities.

A scholar, Piaget, proposed that knowledge must be searched for and thought over and over again. Shadow education merely encourages students to read and recite model answers, but it cannot give students knowledge. There is no royal road to knowledge. I think that private tutoring isn’t beneficial for us.
Is the Internet Good for Teenagers?
Angel Leung       4D

People are criticizing that many teenagers are wasting too much time on the Internet such as gossiping with others and recounting their daily lives via online social networking services like Xanga, Facebook and MSN. I think surfing the Internet has become a daily activity for many teenagers.

It is a common phenomenon that teenagers spend more than three hours a day on the Internet. This situation becomes more serious during the summer holidays. There is no doubt that many teenagers stay at home doing nothing but spend all their time on the Internet. They spend the whole day on Facebook looking at others’ photos, doing psychological tests or playing online games. If teenagers become addicted to the virtual world, they may forget their real life. They may not know how to communicate with others and thus become anti-social. Their academic performances would be affected, too.

It is sure that many teenagers are wasting too much time on the Internet such as playing online games. Nevertheless, the Internet can help teenagers in many ways. They can easily find lots of information on the Internet when they are doing homework or projects. They can also get information from around the world instantly. Students writing about their daily lives on Xanga is obviously a means for them to express their feelings and reduce their pressure. Moreover, they can keep contact with their friends who are studying overseas through the Internet.

All in all, spending time on the Internet for a short period of time can help teenagers to relax. However, it is important for them to strike a balance between the time they spend on the Internet and their daily work. I believe both our physical and mental health will be affected if we spend too much time on the Internet.
When it comes to adolescent problems, I believe that many people would think of drug abuse and youth crime, which are considered as two of the most important issues in Hong Kong. These problems have recently aroused much public and even international concern. Obviously, it is of crucial importance for us to find out some of the possible solutions before it is too late.

Drug abuse has become a grave problem in Hong Kong, especially this year. Two pop stars called Jill Vidal and Kelvin Kwan were found possessing marijuana in Japan, which has a bad influence on their innocent young fans. According to the Commissioner for Narcotics Miss Wong Bik Yi, the number of young drug addicts between 2005 and 2008 soared. There are particular reasons for teenagers to get into the habit. When youngsters’ friends entice them into taking drugs, most of them will not refuse because they are under peer pressure and they cannot suppress their curiosity about drugs. In addition, the exam-oriented education system makes teenagers feel frustrated and stressed, but they cannot express their feelings to their parents because their work-obsessed parents have to work round-the-clock. Eventually, they choose to escape from their problems or draw their parents’ attention by taking drugs.

On the other hand, youth crime including violent crimes, compensated dating and robbery is another knotty problem in Hong Kong. According to the Hong Kong Police Force, there were 3,624 cases of violent crimes committed by youngsters aged between 14 and 17 from January to September in 2006. Worse still, 642 cases involved injuries or death. I think the main reason for juvenile crime is related to their family backgrounds. Some of them may come from broken families. Since they lack parental love, indulgent parents choose to let them do whatever they want, in order to compensate for their loss. As a result, children will do whatever they like or be easily led astray by their undesirable friends. Furthermore, teens want to buy brand-name clothing or expensive accessories to show off or boost their self-esteem, so they resort to committing crimes to earn quick money.
In order to prevent drug abuse and youth crime, the help of parents, schools and the government is essential. To begin with, parents should care more about their children so that they know they are not neglected. Inviting some former drug addicts and criminals to school to give talks on their past experience is another possible way. Teens should also be educated the bad effects of drugs and the consequences of committing crimes during moral education lessons or assemblies. Carrying out school-based drug testing scheme is another feasible means because schools can instill proper moral values into students while the addicts can be helped. The third solution is that the government should launch more anti-drug campaigns, raising public awareness on the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of staying away from drugs. The government should sponsor voluntary organizations to help those misbehaved teenagers, too.

To be succinct, there are various ways to deal with the acute youth problems in Hong Kong. Everyone knows very well that adolescents are the future pillars of our society, so we must go to great lengths to help those problem teenagers. Different communities should work shoulder to shoulder as well. Immediate action should be taken before this alarming trend deteriorates into a tragedy.
A Performance of Commemoration

Andy Wo       4D

Dear Pinter,

Long time no see. How are you? I’m fine. I really miss you and I’d like to have dinner with you some time. I’m writing to invite you to come and see my drama performance. I’m going to have a drama show to commemorate the King of Pop, Michael Jackson. MJ died suddenly in June. Everyone is still mourning the death of this pop music legend. So, our school is going to hold a drama for MJ’s death and let people pay tribute to Michael Jackson.

Jonathan is the scriptwriter of the drama. He revised Michael Jackson’s classic music video <Thriller> and finished the story. The drama is also named <Thriller>. The story is about a pair of lovers who watch a horror movie in a cinema. The girl asks her boyfriend to leave because the film is too frightening, but her boyfriend enjoys the film a lot. The girl is therefore angry with him so she leaves the cinema. The boy then leaves the cinema and chases after his girlfriend. He amuses her by singing and dancing. When they walk past a cemetery, they see many zombies coming out from the graves. The girl drags her boyfriend’s hand and wants to run away, but she discovers that her boyfriend is in fact the head of these thrilling monsters. They sing and dance together and the girl starts to shiver. The darkness falls across the land. It is an evil night of thriller.

If you want to know what will happen to the girl in the story, you must come and watch the drama. Also, we’ll sing many MJ’s classic songs like “Thriller”, “Beat It” and “Bad”. I am sure that you’ll be hypnotized by our performance. We’ll give you a memorable time.

Let me tell you who the main characters are. I’m the leading actor and Vivian is the leading actress. The drama is a result of our painstaking effort in these three months. I really hope you can come and enjoy our show. We were really tired and exhausted when we prepared for the show. I hope people will appreciate our outcome. Not only me, but all the performers, backstage team
members, the director and the scriptwriter will keep our fingers crossed and hope that we will have a great show. We’ve also spent much time in designing and making the horrifying moonlit set and the monsters’ costumes. We promise all things will be perfect. This drama will take place next Friday at 5:30pm in our school hall.

Our friends Stephen, Victor and Jean have already confirmed to come and watch my performance. I hope you can come too. I know MJ is your idol. I think you won’t miss this chance of commemorating MJ. You must come and watch our vivid performance. I’m looking forward to your reply.

Love,
Beckett
Nowadays, drug abuse has become an acute problem among students in Hong Kong. Therefore, the government of Hong Kong is going to carry out a voluntary school-based drug-testing scheme this December in order to prevent the problem of drug abuse from deteriorating.

In fact, the drug-testing scheme is, firstly, to prevent drug-free students from being lured into drug abuse and mitigate the problem of teenagers abusing drugs. Secondly, it is implemented to help young drug addicts but not to punish them. Moreover, the scheme requires both the consent of students and parents. If a student is unwilling to take the test, even if his or her parents’ consent is granted, the student’s choice would be respected and he or she will not be tested.

This drug-testing scheme seems to be quite perfect but the result is certainly doubtful. Since this scheme is not compulsory, the students abusing drugs may not join it. Against such a backdrop, how can teachers or social workers help those drug users and prevent students from being lured into drug abuse?

Moreover, this scheme may infringe on students’ privacy and damage the relationship between teachers and students. Students would not pour out their troubles to teachers, so teachers would have no ways to help them. In some extreme cases, the students whose test results are positive may even be expelled from school as some prestigious schools would like to maintain their good reputations.

Most importantly, the effectiveness of the scheme is completely weakened without having the police involved. If students are found to have abused drugs in the test, schools can only provide guidance and require them to undergo counselling. However, will the students really listen to the social workers and follow their advice? Without any punishment, the deterrent effect of the scheme is inevitably weak and it is doomed to failure from the start.
As a matter of fact, there are various actions which schools can take to deter students from drug abuse. For instance, schools should emphasize the harmful effects of this fatal habit by teaching students more about the side-effects of taking drugs such as ketamine and ecstasy. What is more, teachers should maintain good communication with students so that they can easily identify students’ problems and render assistance duly.

All in all, the government should not carry out the voluntary school-based drug testing scheme because it can never be viable. Instead, schools should employ other strategies such as holding talks and maintaining effective communication with students because they will be more effective than the drug-testing scheme.
Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction with the food quality, the sanitation and the attitude of the waiters of your restaurant. I visited your restaurant with my friend last week to celebrate her birthday. However, it turned out to be an awful experience.

First, I was shocked and appalled to find that there was rotten and dead fish in the fish tank of the restaurant. After we had ordered a fish, I realized that some of the fish in the fish tank were dead. We could only hope that the fish we ordered would not come from there. When the fish arrived, it did not look fresh. We tried it hesitantly and after the first bite, I could not help throwing up at once. My friend felt uncomfortable after having the nasty meal.

Moreover, the chef in the restaurant was dirty and his behavior was intolerable. As the door of the kitchen was open, we could see clearly that the chef was smoking and the cigarette ash dropped onto the food. The whole restaurant stank of cigarette smoke and I could hardly breathe. More importantly, his hands were dirty, but he did not wear any plastic gloves or wash them before cooking.

What made the situation worse was that there were cockroaches, insects and mice running under the tables. It was really horrible and terrifying. My poor friend was shocked and shouted out with fear. All these things made me extremely angry. I tried to complain to a waiter about the terrible situation. To my astonishment, he yelled at me and said we should just get out of the restaurant if we did not like the food. He also said that we were not welcome there. The attitude of this rude and impolite waiter really made me mad!

The attitude, the food quality and the sanitation of your restaurant were undesirable and unacceptable. My friend and I demand a written apology. If we do not get a favorable reply within one week, I will have no choice but to contact the relevant authorities.

Yours faithfully,

L. Tse
Dear Thang,

I was really surprised when I received your letter. You write a good and fluent letter!

I am fifteen years old. I live with my parents and my younger brother. My brother is two years younger than me; he is thirteen years old. I have a good relationship with him and my friends always say they are jealous of me! I always cook and go shopping with my brother. Moreover, everyone says my brother and I look alike. This tells my parents that they did not take the wrong baby from the hospital!

I live in a crowded city, Hong Kong – a small place with a huge population. Tourists always call Hong Kong a ‘concrete jungle’, which is absolutely true. Most of the buildings in my city have at least thirty storeys. When you look up at the sky, you cannot see the complete sky, but buildings.

I have been to Vietnam before; I love Vietnam. The sky, the sunshine, the rivers and the mountains - everywhere in Vietnam looks like a picture. I remember that I went riding on a boat in Ha Long Bay. The kids were swimming in the river and it was very enjoyable. I will never forget the smiles on their faces. It might be common for you and all the Vietnamese but I can tell you that this is one activity that I have always wanted to try, since I had never tried the activity before that!

Life in a city like Hong Kong is also enjoyable. There is always a new activity or product to look forward to; the city is full of excitement.

I love going to school, however, the atmosphere in the schools in Hong Kong is completely different from that of Vietnam. We have many tests every week and it is like everyone is running in the field contending for a championship. We all know that a better education gives us a brighter journey...
and better jobs. Therefore, none of us are trying to escape from school. We are putting forth our best effort in order to get into good universities.

I want to give you a brighter future when you grow up so I will happily sponsor your education. Remember, Thang, wisdom is one of the things that people cannot take away from you. You can always learn from others and everything around you. I hope you get good school results. Good luck!

Best regards,

Emily
Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the drug test introduced by the government recently. Drug abuse is getting more prevalent and becoming a serious problem among adolescents in Hong Kong. Debates are brewing whether students should take the test. However, I oppose to the government's proposal for voluntary drug testing in schools. Instead, more time, effort and resources should be put into anti-drug education and counseling.

Most teens abuse drugs because they lose self-confidence. They feel unhappy with their lives. A number of them go astray because they have bad results at school and are ignored by their friends and parents. Wanting to regain their self-esteem, teens are often introduced to drugs by their so-called friends. Once teens fall into the trap, they find it difficult to get away even though they remorse afterwards. They become drug addicts who cannot save themselves from the bottomless pit. We should give them our hands instead of just criticizing their faults.

As the spokesperson of the government said, the drug test is voluntary; students who refuse to participate in the tests will be invited to chat with the social workers. As the test is voluntary, why do the students need to chat with the social workers? In my opinion, students who refuse to take the test are less likely to be drug abusers but more likely to be students who understand something about freedom. Moreover, the drug tests definitely cannot stop teenagers who are taking drugs. Therefore, the drug test is not a perfect solution to the problem in Hong Kong.

There are many alternatives. Teens, parents, teachers, school principals and social workers should cooperate to fight drugs. Students and parents should maintain a good relationship with one another. According to a recent research, teens who have a good relationship with their family have a lower possibility of going astray, so parents play an important role in anti-drug...
education. Parents should be concerned with their kids. Former drug addicts can be invited to schools to share their experiences in drug rehabilitation, letting students know the disadvantages of drug abuse. Students can also talk to the social workers in their schools if they feel unhappy. I believe the problem in Hong Kong will be eradicated one day.

Yours faithfully,

Carmen Wong
Dear Sir/ Madam,

“Have you bought the bracelet which star XXX had on yesterday?” or “I really want to have a perfect figure like XXX!” are the frequently discussed topics of adolescents nowadays. A lot of people claim that teenagers look upon pop stars, celebrities or athletes as their role models; that they try hard to imitate their styles or outfits. Some even follow their religious beliefs. I think that there are both advantages and disadvantages for such a phenomenon.

On the positive side, teens could acquire energizing convictions through imitating their role models. Perseverance, patience and diligence are obviously crucial elements in an athlete. Despite constant failures, athletes keep on trying and trying till they achieve the moment of success. Without doubt, countless painful tears as well as blood are shed, but athletes never give up. Through these idols, adolescents can learn to be tough and persevere when encountering rigorous events. Likewise, being in such stressful careers such as a singer, model or movie star, pressure-handling skills and social skills are definitely important. Teenagers could mature and become more sophisticated while learning their role models’ positive attributes.

Moreover, teenagers’ figures and outlook could also be improved by learning from the way their role models or athletes train and behave. Teenagers do really care about how they look. Improving their figures could certainly raise their self-esteem and let them become more confident. It would be advantageous while they are growing up.

On the negative side, it would be harmful if teenagers imitate those stars or athletes blindly. Lots of girls are crazy about weight loss in order to be like the slim and skinny models. They are eager to use harmful methods such as overly dieting or exercising to achieve their goal. Since they are still in their puberty, such methods would irrefutably damage their bodies or even disfigure them; it might also cause a long-term side effect, anorexia.
In addition, different persons have different characters. Teenagers might lose their individuality while blindly looking up to the stars. Our individual character, style and attitude towards life makes up who and what we are. It would be dangerous and boring if everyone was modeled from one mold. Therefore, it is vital for parents and teachers to teach their children the correct values of life so that children won’t fall into the illusion built through beautiful packaging.

Lastly, I would love to introduce my role model to you. He is the renowned singer and movie star, Andy Lau. His cheerful and persevering spirit holds the greatest charm for so many of us. Although he is a wealthy, fascinating and well-known person, he still keeps his friendly and natural personality. He does not act like other arrogant young singers. Furthermore, I do deeply appreciate his efforts for charity work over the years. He does not only donate money but also participates in building homes for the poor. He is really a benevolent person. Andy Lau’s kindness to the poor is adorable. I hope that teens could learn to be a person like Andy.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dear Pinter,

How are you? I’ve heard that you’ve had the flu, may God bless you. Our class is going to have a drama performance, so I am writing to ask if you will come and watch it.

Last Monday, our English teacher suggested that we adapt a short story for a drama show. Most of my classmates thought that was a good idea, so we started the preparation of the show. Our story is a small part from *The Little Prince*, which is an inspiring and touching story. The story goes like this: the little prince visited the geographer’s planet one day. The little prince asked questions about the planet but the geographer knew nothing since he had never explored on his planet. Meanwhile, the geographer asked about the little prince’s planet and, from their conversation, the little prince realized that his flower was ephemeral and so he started to feel sorry for leaving his flower alone.

The message from the story is that men usually do things by rules and they never change. They also neglect the beautiful things around them. It is impressive to see that the little prince loves his flower so much, too. What a beautiful and meaningful story, isn’t it?

I will play the geographer, so I’ve tried to read more books to make myself look like a scholar. The geographer is a man who loves geography but does not know how to change, I think he is a funny man. We are in a hurry since we’ll have to perform the drama soon. We spend almost four hours every day on rehearsals. The costumes are ready and the stage lights work well. After wearing my scholar’s hat, all I have to do is to keep my fingers crossed and do my best.
I feel exhausted during these days but I enjoy playing in this drama, feeling the beauty of the lines and tasting them for many times. It’s the real joy of playing in a drama performance.

The show will take place next Friday at 5:30pm in the school hall. I really wish you’ll come and watch it. I’m looking forward to your reply. Write back soon.

Best wishes,
Beckett
Yesterday, I went to Wetland Park with my friends. When I saw a crocodile there, memories filled my mind.

It happened last year when I was studying in Form 1. As usual, I was walking home after school when suddenly I saw something white in colour by the river. I was curious, so I cautiously parted the grass and walked towards it. Surprisingly, I saw an enormous muddy egg lying on the riverbank. At that very moment, I was thrilled, but I was a little frightened. Eventually, I decided to take the weird egg home. The egg was actually quite heavy for me. I carefully put it on my desk. It was a little bit dirty but I was not brave enough to clean it. Then, I just left it under a reading lamp, hoping that it could help hatch the egg. A few days later, while I was reading a comic book, I heard a tapping sound. I instinctively stared at the egg with curiosity. Something was struggling out of the egg and it was a cute baby crocodile. I was exhilarated and I tried to take good care of it.

Time passed, the crocodile became bigger and bigger and I found myself a bit afraid of it. The so-called baby crocodile had no difference from other mature crocodiles. I could no longer hide it in my bedroom but I did not know what to do with it. I tried to ask my friends for advice but they did not believe me and said that I was boasting. I was really depressed. Finally, I decided to take it back to the river. The next morning, I took the crocodile to the riverbank. To my surprise, the crocodile was very quiet as if it was looking forward to explore the new environment. I thought everything had been settled.

A few days later, my crocodile was shown in the newspaper. It had been caught by the staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. The news article said that it would be killed. I panicked so I immediately went to the Department. Although I cried and pleaded, the staff there did not listen to me. They had decided to kill the crocodile, which in their eyes might cause serious danger to the public.

I miss my crocodile a lot. It is painful. I even think it would be better if this had never happened. I regret what I did. Every time I see crocodiles, I remember taking care of my dear baby crocodile.
No Homework Should be Given at Weekends

John Wang  4E

In order to consolidate the knowledge students acquired through lessons, teachers assign homework to students. However, while doing homework can be constructive to students, doing it at weekends, when students are supposed to relax and have fun with their family and friends, provokes controversies. Worried that students’ time would be occupied completely by school assignments, people suggest having no homework at weekends. Yet, the recommendation would undermine the value of homework.

The primary function of homework is to ensure that students understand the knowledge learned at school and that they will be able to apply the knowledge as well. However, there is no school or no lesson during weekends. In other words, unless students are exceptionally diligent and eager to learn, they are unlikely to engage themselves in schoolwork during weekends. Consequently, students, especially if they play too hard over the weekend, are likely to forget some of the many theories and grammar items taught in school. Having homework at weekends, in an effort to reinforce their memory of knowledge, is thus especially crucial as to compensate for the absence of school during weekends.

On top of that, having homework at weekends precludes students from overspending their time on entertainment. Although weekends are for students to enjoy leisure, without homework and school, the delicate balance between work and play would be affected. This would be detrimental to their study as they may overwhelm themselves with entertainment during the weekends. Nevertheless, the homework to be done over the weekends would help restore the balance and ensure that students would at least spare some time for schoolwork.

Apart from the balance between work and play, having homework at weekends balances the distribution of homework over the entire week as well.
Since no homework can be given under the above suggested circumstances, teachers will have no choice but to hand the homework out on weekdays, making students' workload even heavier during school days. As a result, students may feel pressurised or even suffocated by the immense workload. Yet should homework be given at weekends would this disaster be prevented. Thus, homework should be distributed to students at weekends so as to lessen their workload on weekdays.

However, agreeing that homework should be given is one thing, how much homework should be given is another. That is, the amount of homework given to students must not overload them. A teacher should assign reasonable, in other words, accomplishable amount of work to students. By doing this, students can have fun and also work over the weekends and learn to maintain the balance between the two according to their own ability.

All in all, instead of “No homework should be given at weekends”, it should be, “A reasonable amount of homework should be given at weekends”, since the latter is more beneficial to students' development as a whole.
We Will Not Forget You, Michael
Cherry Ho 4F

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the death of Michael Jackson. As we all know, Michael is a prestigious and celebrated star. He is the king of pop and a household name. When he was small, his father forced him and his brothers to earn money and Michael was always punished by his father. Therefore, it made him angry with his father so much that he wanted to get rid of all the things that were related to his father, including his face.

Everybody loved Michael so much before he had the cosmetic surgery. Whatever the people had done before, if they had the plastic surgery, they would not be forgiven. They would be thought of as monsters and so Michael was attacked by others when he was alive. They scolded him, blamed him and even criticized him.

However, he died suddenly. Upon hearing the news of his death, many people felt very sad, sullen and sorrowful. They ascertained that he was dead. Michaels' fans gathered to commemorate him. They gathered to pay tribute to him. They gave him flowers and sang his songs for commemoration. The memorial started with a candlelight vigil and a minute's silence. Some people imitated his dance and plenty of people displayed their collections of memorabilia to the public, like Michael's vinyl records and classic CD albums.

However, has anybody wondered why people only started to love him after he was dead, but they never protected him when he was alive?

Michael suddenly got a lot of fans and why they became his fans, there were no reasons. I am a real fan of Michael. When I was small, I watched his music videos and I started to fall in love with him. He danced so well, and as I loved dancing so much, I paid a lot of attention to his dance and I discovered that he was so charming and amazing. It was his talents that made me so crazy for him. He was such a genius. No one can imitate him and no one can
be so successful like him.

Michael's death has made himself more famous and all his fans gathered to pay tribute to him. Although he is dead, his spirit will stay in our hearts. We will never forget him.

Yours faithfully,

Cherry Ho
Tom was a smart teenager living in the town. When he was about 21, he fell in love with a girl who had bright eyes and long brown hair at the university. However, Tom was too shy to tell her that he was in love with her. Fortunately, Tom and the girl both studied in the same class. It made Tom thrilled for he could look at her often during the lessons. One day, the bell rang and recess started.

Tom stopped beside the girl and asked politely,” What is your name?”

She replied, “I’m Estella.”

“Oh… what a beautiful name it is!” Tom thought. A few weeks later, Tom discovered that Estella was actually a very hard-working student. Whenever Tom had problems, he discussed with Estella. One night, Tom was reading the newspaper when he saw a headline which said, “A Cruel Murderer in the USCEA (the university at which Tom was studying).” Tom was shocked. The newspaper also described the murderer’s appearance. He/she had a thin body with a blue earring on his/her left ear.

The next morning, when Tom was walking along the corridor, he met Estella and wondered, “Did you read the newspaper yesterday?”

Estella replied, “Yes, I read it. What happened?”

Tom said in surprise, “Oh! Don’t you know the terrible news? There was a murderer in our university!”

Suddenly, Estella’s face turned white and whispered, “Ar! We don’t need to worry. We won’t be attacked and the murderer will be arrested soon. Let’s talk about something else!” Her hands were trembling with fear when she was talking to Tom.

Time passed. A month later, Tom was acquainted with Estella. They always chatted with each other and became close friends. Estella was more attracted to Tom gradually and the latter couldn’t stop loving her, either. One day after school, Tom walked near Estella and said slowly, “Estella! I love you very much! Can you be my girlfriend?”

She felt amazed and replied calmly, “ Oh! There are some reasons why I can’t give you my reply now. I am not sure whether I can accept you or not.” That made Tom very disappointed; he thought Estella was avoiding the
question. Although Tom didn’t know whether Estella liked him, they were still good friends. Sometimes they ate supper together in the restaurant.

On the following Saturday afternoon, Tom phoned Estella, “Hi, Estella, are you free tonight? I want to watch a movie with you!”

Estella replied, “Oh… I think I am free at the time, but…”

Tom didn’t listen to her and said quickly, “That’s great! See you tonight!” At half past six, Tom waited outside the cinema. The movie would start at eight o’clock but Estella didn’t arrive on time. Tom was confused, he waited for another fifteen minutes. However, Estella was still nowhere to be seen. At last, Tom left the cinema sadly. When he was walking along the street, he saw Estella standing across the street. She was talking with a handsome boy intimately. Then, they kissed each other.

“Oh my god!” It broke Tom’s heart. And he knew that Estella would never love him. He went back home alone.

After a few days, Estella didn’t go to the university as usual and Tom didn’t know why. At night, when he was reading the newspaper, he screamed immediately. The murderer in the university was actually Estella! She was arrested by the police.

Tom was shocked, but he also found that he was very lucky because the police found the dead body of the handsome boy under Estella’s bed.
Youth Violence and Drug Abuse

During puberty, adolescents face different kinds of problems. Teens are stressed and dejected and they hope to have friends to share their worries. Therefore, they are especially eager to get along with their peers and hope to be accepted by others. Not wanting to be thought as “aliens”, teens would follow and copy their friends’ actions and always try to harmonise with them. However, this phenomenon may lead to some untoward consequences, such as youth crimes and drug abuse.

Nowadays, youth violence is a thorny problem in Hong Kong. According to the Hong Kong Police, there were almost 4,000 cases of violent crimes committed by youngsters between 14 and 17 in 2006. Over 600 of them involved injuries and death. With these alarming statistics, it is little wonder that the teens in Hong Kong are regarded as violent and vicious.

It is a fact that during adolescence, youngsters become more sensitive and emotional. Therefore, it is forgivable that sometimes they might lose control and even strike out at others. However, this is not what deteriorates the situation of violent crimes in Hong Kong.

Peer pressure often drives youngsters or even adults to do things so as to satisfy their peers. By using the weakness that youngsters often do not want to disappoint their friends, the peers always force them to do something that they might not want to do. Sometimes they might be told to boycott a person, or even worse, to punch someone who is hated by the group. Days by days, soon the youngsters would become the core of the group and peer pressure would be more and more tremendous, which keeps tyrannizing them.

This leads to another grave youth problem, drug abuse. The main reason for teenage drug abuse is that adolescents are lured by their peers. According to a survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong, over 65% of the interviewees claimed that they took drugs because their friends asked them to.
Teens always think that their friends are trustworthy. When their peers state that taking drugs is fun and safe, which can help them feel less desperate, gullible youngsters would believe it and pick up the deadly habit. Some of them take drugs out of curiosity, while others do it to show their courage. Regardless of their reasons, both kinds of youngsters would only end up behind bars or in drug rehabilitation centres.

Both drug abuse and youth violence are imperative youth problems for us to tackle. To do so, first of all, youngsters should know that they are still far from mature and sometimes they might not be capable of making sensible and sound judgment. They should always control their temper and listen to elders’ words modestly. Furthermore, youngsters should have their own moral values and think twice before making any decisions. They should not follow their peers’ actions blindly. As for parents, they should always listen to their children’s thoughts and communicate with them. They should not only concentrate on their work and ignore the significance of mutual communication with their children. It is because effective communication helps to understand adolescents and bridge the generation gap between parents and adolescents. Working closely together, we can definitely restrain the problems of drug abuse and youth violence and have a better Hong Kong.
Our Desperate Future?

Garrick Chou  4F

Drug abuse, bullying, unemployment and compensated dating are youth problems prevalent in Hong Kong. Despite the comfortable upbringing and the advantageous living standards, adolescents nowadays seem to be rebellious and impulsive. Are our future pillars hopeless? What can we do to help the juveniles of today?

Regarding youth problems, the increase in juvenile delinquency is, undoubtedly, the most worrying issue. According to the statistics from the Narcotics Division, there were 2,401 drug addicts under 21 years old arrested in 2008. To make the matter worse, the number of students found misusing drugs in school increased during the first half of 2009. Teenage pregnancy, another vivid example of youth problems, is also becoming common these days. Due to the lack of sex education in the family and at school, as well as curiosity about the opposite sex, the immature teens start to have sex, which may result in pregnancy if without contraception measures.

Apart from the crimes committed by the youth, unemployment has also become one of the widespread youth problems in the city. Due to the economic crisis, the percentage of teenage unemployment increased to 24.3% in 2009. Aside from the plight of the economy, the lack of experience is also a major reason for their unemployment. Unlike their parents who had to face ample economic hardship in the past, teenagers nowadays have no burden from their family and have no need to start working at an early age. Rarely do they do part-time jobs and barely do they possess any work experience, they lose their competitive edge and fail to stand out from the crowd. Moreover, being unemployed harms the immature teens’ confidence. In extreme circumstances, the problem may even lead to teenage suicide.

Facing these acute problems, how can we offer our helping hands? Firstly, concerning juvenile delinquency, education at schools and in families is of the utmost importance. Instilling correct moral values will allow youngsters to differentiate between right and wrong. Communication between parents and
their children will always be useful because it can help parents understand their offspring better. Peer pressure is often seen as the major culprit of drug abuse. Therefore, helping the young avoid getting into bad company is crucial. Parents should constantly give advice and render assistance to their children in a bid to help them avoid those friends who will lead them astray. Encouraging the young to seek advice from social workers and holding talks about the disadvantages of drug abuse will also be effective. Besides, some youngsters resort to taking drugs because they feel helpless. Having no solutions in the face of problems, they want to escape from reality. In view of this, teaching them how to reduce stress should be top of the agenda.

As for the unemployment problem, support from the government is totally essential. After the financial turmoil, the unrealistic teens with poor academic results stand a slim chance of getting a job. Providing more career opportunities is what the government must do. Courses on professional training should be offered to deal with the problem of their lack of work experience.

As we can see, there are always a multitude means for the youth to rebuild their lives and for us to guide them to the correct path. We all make mistakes, but we can learn from them and live active optimistic lives. We should learn and treasure every moment of our lives. With proper guidance and sufficient support, our future pillars must be able to lead fruitful lives.
Embracing the New Form of Communication with Proper Time Management
Kiki Ng 4F

Since the Internet has come into use, it has grabbed everyone’s heart. Soon all kinds of online networking services are springing up everywhere. However, as time passes, parents start to criticize. Are teenagers wasting too much time on the Internet?

In the past, we had to write letters if we wanted to keep contact with our foreign friends. We made phone calls to chat with our classmates. However, all these can be done within a few clicks of a mouse now. We send emails and chat on free online messengers such as ICQ and MSN. We can simply stay at home and play online games and share our blogs and photos with different friends via the Internet. It seems that we can do everything with various online networking services. Undoubtedly, they have replaced the old traditional ways of communication.

On the other hand, the advantages of online networking services are what parents are worrying about. These services are so convenient that it seems much harder for teenagers to control themselves not getting addicted to them. In fact, more and more teenagers have become net addicts nowadays. They stay at home and sit in front of the computers around the clock without rest, which inevitably leads to a lot of serious study and health problems. Obviously, the parents’ concerns are not without grounds.

However, do we not also, blame adolescents for spending too much time talking on the phone? Do we not scold them for always playing sports and are late for home? Teenagers are indeed, not wasting too much time on the Internet, but spending too little time with their parents. They choose to share their feelings with their mates mostly through online networking services and therefore parents are often neglected.
Parents should stop threatening to switch off their children’s computers, as it barely has any use. Adolescents are indeed immature and they fail to allocate their time properly. Online networking services themselves have no harm. If their children refuse to listen to their instructions, parents should talk to their children calmly and try to reach a compromise on how they should manage their time properly.

The world is ever-changing. We have come into a new era of information technology and we have to accept the Internet as part of our daily lives. Adolescents can make better use of the online networking services by wisely managing their time. Sitting in front of the computer for too long will damage their eyesight and health. Furthermore, chatting on messengers reduces our chances to talk with others face to face. If adolescents can get the golden means on how much time they should spend on the Internet, I believe that parents will stop nagging their children anymore and surely they will restore their confidence in both their children and also the online networking services.
Adolescents today are the pillars of society in the future. For the sake of the next generation, moral education is becoming more and more important in schools nowadays. However, the amount of violent crime cases is worryingly soaring. According to the information given by the Hong Kong Police, there were 3,624 cases of violent crimes committed by youngsters aged between 14 and 17 from January to September 2006. Are youngsters becoming more violent today?

To start with, adolescents are extremely impulsive because they are undergoing a period of mental development. Due to the exam-oriented education system of Hong Kong, adolescents may become temperamental when they are under stress. Because of that, bullying and other violent crimes among teenagers occur. In the beginning, it is perhaps just a quarrel among youngsters. However, without parents’ and teachers’ guidance, things go wrong and the quarrel becomes violent actions. As a result, their friends may be involved in the case as well due to peer pressure. Adolescents are easily led astray by their friends, so when proper guidance is absent, violent crimes may be committed.

On the other hand, violent crimes among youngsters are also the results of their low self-esteem. Adolescence is a period of physical development, and when adolescents are not satisfied with their appearance, they may suffer from poor personal image and low self-esteem. In addition, the society we are in nowadays is becoming more and more competitive and demanding. Whenever adolescents fail to achieve a goal, particularly in the academic aspect, their self-esteem is injured. Many of them may go into the wrong direction trying to build up their self-esteem by committing violent crimes in groups of people, thinking that they can have a sense of satisfaction from bullying others.

To remedy this problem, parental guidance is of vital importance. Parents are supposed to understand their children very well, and they should teach their children to distinguish between right and wrong, giving them the correct
moral values. To be specific, parents should spend more time with their offspring, understanding them and talking with them. Besides, schools play an important role in adolescents’ development. While social workers’ help is needed, schools should also provide more kinds of activities, such as athletic competitions, singing contests and drawing competitions, for students to join in order to help them to unleash their potential and build up their self-esteem.

To conclude, immediate actions are needed before things deteriorate into tragedies. Teachers and parents should work shoulder to shoulder, so that teenagers today can be the masters of the future instead of the masters of violence.
What is Wrong with the Youth of Today?

Samuel Cheng 4F

Nowadays, living standards in Hong Kong are better than ever. However, do they lead to a generation of happy teenagers? In fact, more and more problems are afflicting the youth of today. According to a survey conducted by Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN), the number of people taking drugs under 21 years old has increased by 13.1%, from 2,581 people in 2006 to 2,919 people in 2007. From these figures, we can see that youth problems are deteriorating. In this article, I would like to express my opinions on two main problems, drug abuse and addiction to the Internet.

The first problem is drug abuse, which is a worrying problem in Hong Kong. There are a few reasons which cause drug abuse. First, teenagers are curious about drugs. They can easily access drugs due to the availability of inexpensive ketamine. Second, they have a wrong except about drug abuse. They think that taking drugs is merely a trivial matter and they are strong enough to avoid being addicted to them. However, the truth is when they have the first dose, their body needs more and more drugs and at last they lose control. Third, they are under immense peer pressure. According to a survey carried out by the Census and Statistics Department, 62.9% of people under 21 want to gain their friends’ acceptance. Teenagers always want to be accepted by their peers and not to be isolated. If they have some bad friends, they will be easily led astray.

The second youth problem is addiction to the Internet. This culture has become more and more popular among adolescents. There are a few reasons. First, they cannot control themselves. Once they start surfing the Internet, they become obsessed and forget everything around them. Second, they want to evade their problems. When they enter the virtual world, they can put all the problems, stress and anxiety they have out of their minds. This is why they will be easily hooked on it. Third, they can acquire a sense of satisfaction when playing online games. A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG) shows that 36.7% of the interviewees cannot stop themselves from playing online games. Many adolescents who have
unsatisfactory academic results are very good at playing online games. Therefore, they find a sense of satisfaction in the virtual world and are not willing to stop indulging in it.

Although these youth problems are getting more and more serious, there are still ways to solve them. First of all, I suggest that schools and the government should cooperate in the voluntary drug testing scheme. It is a feasible way to curb the spread of drugs among students and identify the students who take drugs before it is too late. Schools should also teach students the disadvantages of taking drugs. Besides, parents should pay attention to their children at all times to see if there is anything strange regarding their behaviour.

I also suggest that parents reach a consensus about the time limit their children use the Internet. It is of vital importance for parents not to forbid them from using the Internet because it will only make things worse, but if youngsters are indulging too much in the Internet, parents should seek guidance from social workers. Moreover, they should install firewalls in the computers in order to prevent their children from surfing those websites which contain violent and pornographic information. Teens should also be taught to establish the right attitudes and habits of using the Internet.

In conclusion, drug abuse and addiction to the Internet are the products of teenagers’ curiosity, wrong concepts, peer pressure and failure to control themselves, evasion of their problems and a sense of satisfaction. The government, schools, social workers and parents play an important role in solving the problems. Indeed, immediate action should be taken by these parties before the problems deteriorate into tragedies.
Dear Chris,

Hi! I haven’t sent you an email for a long time! How are you? Are you getting on well?

I have joined a drama class during the summer holiday. Our class has been rehearsing a production whose public performance will be held next month. I would like to invite you to come to watch my performance.

My drama teacher is very experienced in drama. He studied Performing Arts at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA). He is now an instructor at HKAPA and he teaches us all the skills required for a professional drama actor. He also teaches us how to use body languages to express ourselves. Being a good singer himself, he instructs us how to sing beautifully and ways to control our voices on stage. I’ve learnt a lot about drama from him. I am happy that I have become more confident and my spoken English has improved through acting in English on stage.

After the two-month lessons on signing and acting, our drama teacher and we wrote a script together and we are going to perform it next month. It is a romantic comedy. It’s about a fatty who falls in love with a beautiful girl. He is rejected by her many times, but they get together finally. Besides being funny and entertaining, social reality is also reflected in our drama. I think this meaningful love comedy is worth watching. The most unbelievable thing is that the person who is going to act the role of the beautiful girl is me. The director, our teacher, said it would make the drama funnier, so I accepted the role at last. Will it be funny seeing me, such a sporty boy, act as a beautiful girl?

Except the cast, many things are still not yet confirmed because we are still having rehearsals, and the props and costumes are not finished yet. My drama teacher said drama rehearsals were full of dynamics. Inputs from different parties may lead to different outcomes. Hence, many things are still
subject to changes. Of course, I can’t tell you too much. There are plenty of surprises for the audience. Come and find them out on the day of our public performance!

Do you feel interested in our drama after reading my “promotion”? You can buy the ticket on the Internet (www.buyingtickets.com). Type the title of our play, Fatty and Beauty, in the search box and the website will guide you through all the steps. I forget what the exact price of the tickets is. I think it’s about $200 each. Or, if you can respond to me before this Friday, I can reserve two tickets for you. Please read the details on the website and get back to me soon.

I am looking forward to seeing you. Hope I will see you at my public performance.

Love,
Sam
Dear Sir/Madam,

In regard to the launch of the voluntary revised drug-testing pilot scheme, I disapprove of it. Narcotics Division’s statistics revealed that the overall situation of drug addiction in Hong Kong has been alleviated, while the number of young drug addicts has spiraled. We can see that drug addiction is a scourge to Hong Kong society. Many family tragedies and teenage suicide stem from drug-related problems. Definitely, the Hong Kong government has a duty to address the problem. However, when they carry out the drug testing scheme, I am really skeptical about the effectiveness of its fine-tune measures.

Why do youngsters take drugs? Psychologists say that there are three factors which drive adolescents to take drugs, namely curiosity, stress and peer pressure. Many would resort to drugs for seeking oblivion and excitement in an attempt to allay their stress and escape from the reality. In my mind, no one is immune to the addictive effects of taking drugs. Once they are hooked, it is difficult to kick it and it requires immense effort. I doubt whether the drug-testing scheme is effective since students can refuse to take the test and undergo counseling. How can the government pull all the drug users back onto the right track so as to curb the problem? Besides, this project fails to trace the sources of drugs. It only continues to favor the drug smugglers and traffickers. It is imperative for the implementation of the plan to be more comprehensive and territory-wide. Otherwise, the government is just wasting taxpayers’ money.

Most teenage drug addicts study in secondary schools. In order to prevent students from taking drugs, schools always promote the messages of the risks of falling into drugs by using different means. However, since teenagers are undergoing puberty, they incline to be rebellious and they always ignore teachers’ advice. Regarding the revised scheme, since the police are not going to play a part in it, the effectiveness of it may be undermined.
To tackle the problem, it takes two palms to clap. There was a sharp drop of the number of youth addicts after launching the statutory drug-testing scheme. In my opinion, the scheme should be mandatory. In a bid to create a harmonious and healthy society, youth drug addicts and teachers should live up to their social responsibility. Youth drug addicts needn’t worry that their future would be ruined after taking the tests as they would not be prosecuted and people around them will render them conducive treatments.

For the sake of dealing with the problem of youth drug abuse, besides making amendments of the scheme, there are also precautionary measures that can be taken. Needless to say, teachers’ and parental care is vital to the prevention of social problems. They should compliment their children and students when they behave well. Don’t exert undue pressure on them. When we see our friends become embroiled in drugs and bad companies, we should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude or watch the situation with folded arms. We should dissuade them from associating with those “undesirable” things and people.

Some addicts take drugs due to their poor academic performance. For long-term tactics, schools should divert more resources on providing more extracurricular activities for the students in order to motivate them and develop their interests. This measure will help to occupy students’ time and keep them away from drugs. Being recognized by the people around them, their self-esteem can be boosted so that it may help them to stay clear of drugs. In addition, with the aid of the government’s propaganda and talks, students can be inculcated with more correct values, for example, the accurate attitude to refuse friends’ request of taking drugs.

The drug abuse problem is rampant in Hong Kong. The problem of drug abuse deserves all full attention. No doubt, the drug-testing scheme will be effective on combating the problem. However, there are many loopholes of the revisions of the drug-testing scheme launched by the government, which spark off much controversy. The government should map out the strategies carefully, lest it will fall short of the success.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Kick the Devastating Habit

Dominic Man  5A

A lot of newspaper reports have shown that the number of young addicts is surging at an alarming rate. Cocaine, heroine, ketamine, ecstasy tablets and cough syrup are most commonly taken by teenage addicts. The reasons for teenage drug abuse are many.

First, most teenagers take drugs because of peer pressure. Even in schools, there are some students who take drugs. Since they want to make friends and gain the other’s recognition, they will be tempted to try drugs when they are offered them. However, they usually become addicted after they have tasted the drugs once or twice. Some youngsters, on the other hand, want to show that they are mature, cool and rebellious in front of their peers so they try drugs in order to appear fashionable. Soon, their desire for drugs becomes so strong that they can’t resist them. They then fall prey to drug dealers and the triads and thus taking drugs finally becomes an immovable daily habit.

The next reason is that drugs are easily accessible. There is a multitude of ways for teenagers to buy or access drugs. They can come in contact with drugs through their classmates, friends or even their brothers and sisters, let alone the unscrupulous pharmacies which sell soft drugs for huge profit. The temptation of drugs is everywhere so it would be difficult for the young generation to fight against the fashion.

The third reason is that some teenagers like the sensation brought out by drugs. They misunderstand that drugs can bring them the sense of excitement and freedom so they are able to temporarily escape from reality, forget their anger or dissatisfaction, and even add spice to their lives.

Nevertheless, drugs are hazardous to health. The government should therefore help the youths to keep away from drugs. An effective means is to legislate stricter laws to forbid teenagers from taking drugs. The government can introduce a pilot drug testing scheme in schools to identify teenage drug users, because they may be afraid that they would be discovered. Also,
parents play an integral part in protecting their offspring against drugs. They should be concerned about their children and observe them to see if they are behaving differently from usual. Parents shouldn’t conceal the truth but help their children to quit drugs. Besides, the government has to allocate more resources on publicity in order to promote public health and persuade teenagers to stay away from drugs, such as producing more advertisements on the adverse effects of drugs abuse.

All in all, drugs abuse poses a threat to our next generation. The government and society should pursue a tough course of action to combat the problem.
Say No to Teenage Drug Abuse
Peggy Cheung  5A

Repeated incidents of teenage drug abuse in recent months have triggered growing public concern. Numerous newspaper reports have revealed that the number of young addicts is on the increase at an alarming rate.

Nowadays, drugs are easily accessible to youngsters so drug users are younger. Drugs such as heroine, cocaine and ketamine, etc. are commonly taken by teenage addicts. Most drug addicts obtain drugs from drug-pushers, who tend to try every possible means to induce youngsters to try drugs. Those drug-pushers never consider how drugs can jeopardize people’s lives for they just want to earn money selfishly. Also, some pharmacies also sell drugs, like cough syrup to people who don’t have a doctor’s prescription. The easy accessibility of drugs tempts more teenagers to try drugs.

Out of curiosity and peer pressure, young people are induced to go for a try and they often get hooked on drugs after they have tasted it once or twice. Teenagers are reluctant to reject their friends because they have the wrong concept believing that conforming to their peers shows their sense of belonging to the group. Eventually, their desire for drugs becomes so strong that they resort to illegal means to satisfy their desire and they finally fall prey to drug dealers and the triads. To tackle the problem, I suggest schools should invite professional doctors and social workers to give talks about the devastating effects of drug abuse.

Moreover, some celebrities and famous artists are drug users. Their lifestyles have a strong impact on adolescents, because they are public figures and youngsters look upon and imitate them. In order to build a healthy climate, a drug testing scheme should be launched concerning the entertainment industry to act as deterrence and at the same time instill correct moral values into the minds of teenagers.

In recent months, the government has pursued a tough course of action to curb Hong Kong’s drug problem. It should legislate tough laws against drug
dealers and drug users. A drug testing scheme in schools should also be implemented to identify student drug users before it is too late.

Finally, parents also play an indisputable role in protecting their children against drugs. Concerted effort from all sectors of the society is needed to address the problem of teenage drug abuse.
Playing Sports or Computer Games?

Jackie Leung  5B

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my opinions about why students should spend less time playing computer games and more time playing sports.

The first reason is that playing sports can help students relieve pressure. Nowadays, students are under pressure from schoolwork and parents. While playing sports, students have to concentrate on the games and this can help them to forget their problems. Also, if students are good at playing sports, they can build up self-esteem and confidence. Being a more positive person can help them cope with pressure well.

Secondly, playing sports can help students improve their social skills. Being involved in more outdoor activities, students will not just stay at home, but have more chances to meet new friends such as teammates. They can also learn how to communicate with one another. However, when students play computer games, they just sit in front of the computer screen without interacting with anyone. Eventually, they may forget how to socialize with others. Possessing good social skills is definitely beneficial to their future.

Last but not least, playing computer games makes students addicted to the virtual world. Although students can get excitement from playing computer games, there are lots of unsuitable games in the net such as violent games. If they keep on playing these unhealthy computer games for a long time, their mental health may be affected and they may become more aggressive.

To conclude, playing sports is definitely a healthier activity than playing computer games. So I hope that students know what to choose as their leisure activity.

Yours faithfully,

B. Chan

B.Chan
A Wise Choice for Parents

Tiffany Fan 5B

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my views about parents teaching their children at home instead of sending them to school. In 2000, there was a father who refused to let his daughter go to school because he thought that the education system in Hong Kong was not trustworthy. In spite of this incident, most parents opt for the 12-year compulsory education. I have some points to share on this matter.

My first opinion is that students can learn social skills and discipline at school. As students come from different stratum of society, they can make friends at school and they can learn how to get along with people of different backgrounds. Such social skills will be useful for them. Also, school rules discipline their behavior and students can learn to obey their teachers and get along in harmony with their classmates. These may help them to learn to conform to social norms in the future.

Secondly, schools provide students with a better and more competitive atmosphere to motivate them to pursue their goals. The facilities provided at schools can also give students a better environment to learn. Through the various quizzes and tests at schools, students also learn to compete with one another so they improve themselves constantly in order to outperform their classmates.

My last view is that schools offer more facilities and teaching materials to help students learn. There are many facilities at school such as projectors and computers to help teachers teach in interesting ways, which would make the subjects more captivating. Teachers at schools are more professional because they are trained, so they have the techniques to teach students of different abilities. Besides, teachers can also prepare appropriate and effective teaching materials for students so that they may acquire knowledge easily and systematically.
All in all, it cannot be denied that school education has lots of benefits and it may let students achieve an all-round development during their adolescence. I strongly recommend that parents should send their children to school.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Wong
Dear John,

Sorry for taking so long to write. I hope all has gone well with you and I do miss you indeed! I just can’t wait to tell you about an amazing day when I worked as a taxi driver.

For one day, I was allowed to drive a taxi in Hong Kong. ‘The Golden Bauhinia Square, please,’ a western tourist asked with a British accent. When I heard this soft voice, I was pretty astonished to see that my first passenger was an attractive and charming foreign lady who was sightseeing in Hong Kong by herself. As a pleasant and hospitable taxi driver, I tried my best to introduce to her the features of the city and some of the famous scenic spots, like the Ngong Ping 360 and the Big Buddha.

Within a split second, my taxi arrived at the Golden Bauhinia Square. My first mission was completed. ‘Thank you for your introduction,’ a sweet voice entered my ears and my passenger got out gracefully. I was delighted with a great sense of satisfaction I had never experienced before.

Unfortunately, I soon discovered that she had left her wallet in my taxi. However, not the slightest clue did I have about her whereabouts. ‘What should I do? Where should I go to find her?’ I pondered for I could do nothing but stay in my taxi, waiting for her to return to the square.

Eventually, she came back with a bright smile and exclaimed, ‘Oh! My lovely wallet!’ She was pleased to find it back and appreciated my honesty, so she invited me to have dinner with her. She was thankful to me. Frankly speaking, I had never imagined having such a fascinating dinner with a pretty girl on my first day as a taxi driver.

Looking back now, I really enjoyed the day I worked as a taxi driver though I only earned fifty dollars the whole day. I felt glad and even blissful having helped the others. I hope you will have such opportunity to help other people, too. I’m sure you will also find it rewarding and joyous. Do drop me a line when you are free!

Best Regards,
Chris
Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my view on students spending less time playing computer games and more time playing sports. In my opinion, it is very important that students spend less time playing computer games and more time playing sports.

First of all, playing sports is a good leisure activity for students to relax and it can make them healthier. After having lessons for a long time, students will feel stressed. Playing sports is a very healthy activity to relieve pressure. It helps to speed up metabolism so the body burns calories faster. It can also help to prevent heart diseases and build up a strong physique. On the other hand, playing computer games is not good for the eyes. If students sit in front of the computer for a long time, their eyes will feel tired easily. It is detrimental to their eyes. Although playing computer games can also relieve pressure, it is not a healthy pastime and students may get addicted to it easily.

The second reason is playing sports can help students improve their social skills. Students have to communicate with other teammates while playing sports. They can learn how to communicate with others in a suitable way such as how to be polite and friendly. This is very important as they need to have good social skills as they grow up. However, if students lock themselves in a room playing computer games, they will gradually become addicted to it. They may become urban hermits and will be afraid to socialize with others.

Last but not least, playing computer games make students get lost in real life and indulge in the virtual world. If they have anything they do not want to face, they will just get back to the online world. They will never learn how to face their problems, so their self-esteem will be low. On the contrary, playing sports can make students feel confident and relaxed. They can share their feelings with their teammates if they have any questions while they will have no one to share their difficulties with if they keep on playing computer games.
Oasis

Some of them may even develop antisocial behavior and become hermits.

Having taken all points mentioned into account, I believe playing sports is more beneficial than playing computer games. So, I hope your readers know what to choose as their leisure activities after reading this letter.

Yours faithfully,

B. Chan

B. Chan
Dear John,

I have a wonderful experience to share with you. Recently, I have worked as a taxi driver for one day and never will I forget the thrilling experience. I was physically hurt, yet I’ve learnt a lot from the incident.

On that day, my uncle was sick so I worked as a taxi driver substituting him. When he phoned me and made his request in the morning, I promised him without second thought because I liked driving very much. I got the key from my uncle and started my day. Initially, I had some worries for it was the first time I took up a job and served customers on my own.

Five hours later, out of my expectation, I had already earned a thousand dollars. I thought I should tell my uncle the good news so I drove to his home and told him that everything had been alright.

On the way to my uncle’s place, I noticed something wrong with my taxi but I didn’t stop because I didn’t know how to fix a car. When my taxi was taking a sharp turn, suddenly, it lost control and swayed violently to the side of the road. Finally, it collided into a big tree and the engine died. Most luckily, I just suffered several minor wounds and a few bruises so I was discharged from the hospital after having received basic treatment.

My uncle didn’t blame me but joked, ‘your driving technique sucks!’ This incident taught me that I should always be careful while driving. Thereafter, I always drive slowly and cautiously because I don’t want to encounter accidents again.

Your friend,
Chris
Dear Editor,

School education is indispensable for children. All children of suitable age must be sent to school. For the sake of their children, most parents are in the pursuit of sending their children to prestigious schools because they all share the same belief – schools provide the best education.

First, schools offer an all-round, up-to-date and well-structured curriculum for students. Students can be taught with professional skills and different kinds of handy teaching materials, which can help to cultivate knowledgeable and competitive students in a step-by-step manner.

Second, school teachers are professionals. All teachers are required to receive relevant teacher training. This can ensure that all of them are well-trained academically and pedagogically so they can pass on the knowledge to their students effectively. So, sending children to schools is better than having parents teaching them at home.

Last but not least, schools not only pass on knowledge but also provide chances for students to learn how to behave themselves. Nowadays, parents dote on their children and seldom punish them because they are often busy with their work. They want to spend time with their children happily, so they are reluctant to impose punishment on their children even when their children misbehave. Their children eventually become difficult and mischievous. The school is thus the best place for students to learn to conform to rules because it maintains strict discipline. Hence, the school would help to cultivate students as decent and responsible individuals.

In conclusion, the advantages of school education outweigh homeschooling's. Schools provide comprehensive education for students whereas home schooling does not. Sending children to school is the best option for parents.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dear John,

I haven’t written to you since last year. How is your school life? Last week, I got a rare opportunity working as a taxi driver for one day. Let me tell you about my unforgettable experience.

Several things happened on that day. Some of the events were embarrassing while others made me delighted. That day, I had to wake up at six o’clock in the morning to do the cleaning. Then, I started my day. I soliloquized, ‘Let me drive to the taxi stand and pick up my first customer.’ So, I drove to a taxi stand outside a train station, imagining the face of my first passenger. No sooner had I been dreaming about a kind old man than two teens in strange costumes jumped into my taxi. ‘Oh!’ I groaned and asked, ‘Sir, where can I drive you to?’ They thought for a while and said, ‘Wherever.’

‘I’ll drive you to the Festival Walk then,’ I answered.

Then, terrible things happened. The two youngsters started chatting on their mobile phones loudly. The boy with a purple hat even started smoking in my taxi. What a nasty guy! ‘Please don’t smoke in my taxi!’ I uttered. He looked at me in an arrogant manner and ignored me. I repeatedly told him to stop smoking. He swore, ‘You pig! Shut your stupid mouth!’ I was so angry that I kicked them out of my car. I couldn’t stand such two mean guys.

Before long, I went to another taxi stand to look for another passenger. I waited for a long time but I still couldn’t find one. It was a boring afternoon and I finally found a passenger at five thirty. She was very kind to me. She had a lovely face and gold hair. I was totally attracted by her stunning good look and her friendly tone. We talked all the way and she just made me wish that we would never reach our destination.
I said good-bye to her at last. I was still thinking about her when suddenly she ran after my taxi. She told me I had given her an extra change of four hundred dollars. What a perfect loving angel she was!

It was a wonderful experience and a memorable sweet dream! Write back and I'll tell you more next time.

Yours,

Chris
Dear John,

This summer holiday, in order to reward myself for having worked so hard throughout the school year, I spent most of my spare time sleeping and hanging out with friends. One week later, however, I began to feel very bored, so I decided to look for a summer job.

My uncle is a taxi driver. Coincidentally, he had broken his leg and so he could not work for a week. He asked me to substitute him and take up his job for one day. I was very joyful and yet nervous because it would be my first job. I studied the map of Hong Kong and practiced some talking skills so as to prepare for my first day as a taxi driver. Also, I went to bed early the night before.

The next morning, I drove my taxi to the Central Pier taxi stand and waited for passengers. At 10:00 a.m., my first customer, an old lady got into my car. She said she wanted to go to the Kowloon Park. I was relieved at the moment, thinking that it would be a good start. Finally, I made more than two hundred dollars on that trip.

My second passenger was a man who was heading to the Kowloon Bay MTR station. I was very anxious as I did not know the way to the destination. Fifteen minutes later, I arrived at Kowloon Bay, yet I still did not have a clue where the MTR station was. My passenger was gradually losing his patience so I tried my very best to pacify him by talking about football matches, the topic of interest among men. At last, we arrived at the Kowloon Bay MTR station in fifteen minutes. I thought that being a taxi driver was never an easy task because one had to be familiar with all the roads in Hong Kong.

No matter how many times I went over that day in my mind, I was still amazed at how the events just fell into place. But I suppose that’s life, isn’t it? I will never forget my experience of being a taxi driver. I’ve learnt how to communicate with customers and I will study the map of Hong Kong more industriously because I will probably pursue my career as a taxi driver in the future.

Yours,
Chris Wong.
Dear Sir/ Madam,

As a subscriber of your newspaper, I would like to respond to the article about some parents who would like to teach their children at home instead of sending them to school.

I totally disagree with home study out of four reasons.

Firstly, parents violate the law of Hong Kong if they don’t send their children to school. As stated in the law of HK, the government provides 12-year compulsory education; therefore, all children are required to attend school. If parents prohibit them from attending school, the parents will be subjected to imprisonment. There is no compromise between schooling and home study.

Secondly, no matter how educated the parents are, they cannot replace the function of teachers. Teachers have received their teacher training before they take up their profession. They know how to learn, what to teach and when to teach what. As for parents, even with good academic background, they may not be able to design a suitable curriculum as set with the collaborative effort of schools and teachers. Also, parents have different expectations of their children, so they may have difficulties struggling between the roles being a teacher or a parent at different time. They may not know when their children should rest and be given holidays. This will exert excessive pressure on their children and thus adversely affect their parent-child relationship.

Thirdly, children can learn effective communication skills at school. Students meet their teachers, classmates and schoolmates at school five days a week. They need to interact with one another no matter how reluctant they are. Through interaction with all parties, they learn important values like respect for others, sense of belonging and friendship, etc. Thus, they learn to...
communicate diplomatically. These are all the attributes that children cannot learn at home without interaction with non-family members. Therefore, it is essential for students to study at school.

Some parents who don’t send their children to school are doing it out of anxiety. They are worried that their children will meet bad friends or get hurt. However, every society has its good and bad sides. School is a society in miniature. By going to school, children are given the chance to comprehend the society at an earlier stage. In other words, they learn to avoid getting hurt. It is obviously better to send children to school than to build a greenhouse at home for them.

In conclusion, teaching children at home instead of sending them to school will put children in a more vulnerable situation as they will neither be able to learn how to deal with the world around them nor do it in a proper manner. Parents will be put behind bars also. Therefore, for the sake of children and themselves, parents should send their children to school.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
No Homework Should be Given at Weekends

Andy So 5D

In Hong Kong, almost all schools, including primary and secondary schools, give students homework to do at weekends for educational purposes. But in my opinion, there should be no homework given at weekends.

Under normal circumstances, students need to review what they have learnt from Monday to Friday at weekends. Also, they are given tests constantly to check their learning progress. The tests and revisions are already enough to help reinforce and consolidate the knowledge students have learnt through the lessons. There are no apparent reasons why students are obliged to do extra homework. Actually, no homework is beneficial for students, as they should be given more time to do other things, like joining activities that can help develop their multi-talents.

Moreover, without homework at weekends, students are granted more time to rest and enjoy life. Since they have more time to do their own things at weekends, students can spend time with their parents. They can go to restaurants, go shopping or even play chess and chat with friends for a long time on Sundays. As our society emphasizes greatly on congruent development of teenagers, it is strongly advised that students should take their time to join different activities, like sports, training sessions and music classes. All these activities take up students’ leisure time, yet they help develop students’ talents. They also help students relax their mind and strengthen their bond with their family if students and their family participate in the activities or games together. If students can learn so much more when they are freed from homework at weekends, then, why should there be homework at weekends?

Another advantage of having no homework at weekends is that it can help reduce students’ pressure. There are many teenage suicide cases in Hong Kong. Most of these cases are actually caused by the insurmountable pressure derived from homework and tests assigned to students. Homework is the origin
of students' pressure on top of the busy timetable set by schools. Students can only take rests at weekends. If too much homework is given at weekends, the pressure exerted on students will be doubled or even tripled! So, I strongly suggest that homework shouldn’t be given at weekends.

Some people who tend to stick to traditions may insist that students need practice through homework. Nevertheless, I think students can practise through homework from Monday to Friday. There is no need for students to do homework at weekends anymore! From the above points, I strongly propose that no homework should be given at weekends.
Dear Billy,

How are you these days? I haven’t seen you for a long time and I miss you a lot. I heard that you play online games very well. When will you come back to school? I want to ask you the techniques of playing the Little Fighter in person.

Why don’t you come back to school? I am worried about you. I understand that you are under a lot of academic pressure, especially the HKCEE. Don’t worry! I can share the pressure with you. Remember, you are not alone. I am always on your side and I will support you.

If you want to succeed in the HKCEE, you should hit the book now. You should give up computer games but spend more time on studying. You should pay heed to the lessons, especially the English lessons. If you are in trouble, you had better take initiative to ask teachers for help. All of them are friendly and they will help you wholeheartedly. What’s more, we can form a peer study group, so we could study together after school. Don’t give up! The HKCEE is not as challenging as you think. Therefore, don’t say that you can’t cope with it. If you think you can, you can. This is what we call self-fulfilling prophecy in Psychology.

Besides studying hard, I think extra-curricular activities can help you, too. You could join some activities to release your stress. You shouldn’t turn to computer games for psychological relief. The more computer games you play, the more detached you will be from your friends. I am sure you can make more friends when you participate in extra-curricular activities. You should also get along with your classmates; they would offer you help if necessary.

Billy, the whole 5E class longs to see you and all of us are waiting for your return. Will you give a try? I am looking forward to seeing you soon.

Love,
Jonathan
Choosing Sports Over Computer Games

Crystal Pang  5E

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my opinion on why it is important for students to spend less time playing computers games and more time playing sports. Nowadays, students are always obsessed with computer games and do not play sports. This reveals that students do not understand the value of playing sports. The reasons below explain my views.

Firstly, it is clear that playing sports is good for our health. Physically, playing sports helps students build up a muscular physique, relieve stress and prevent different kinds of disease. Mentally, it can help improve your self-image and make you become more confident. On the contrary, students who always play computer games tend to have low self-esteem and may become anti-social easily. Moreover, they usually sit in front of the computer without talking to anyone. Eventually, their neck and back will become sore.

Secondly, playing sports can also improve students’ schoolwork. According to a survey, students will have a clearer mind and a better memory after playing sports. Students usually feel energetic and study well if they do regular exercise. On the other hand, spending lots of time playing computer games put students in a disadvantage. After staring at the computer screen for hours, students will feel fatigue and may not be able to concentrate on their homework. Even if they can finish doing their homework, they obviously cannot focus on their studies. Their schoolwork will probably be affected.

Finally, I think playing sports is a very good way to train students’ leadership skills and learn how to communicate with others. While playing sports such as basketball, students are trained to take care of themselves and their teammates. They must cooperate well and have a strong team spirit in order to win a match. In addition, students can experience success and failure in playing sports games.
I strongly believe that it is important for students to spend less time playing computer games and more time playing sports. Playing sports is good for students’ health and it can help them improve their schoolwork. More importantly, it helps students form close friendship and develop social skills which they will need in the future. I hope students will be aware of the importance of playing sports and spend less time playing computer games.

Yours faithfully,

B. Chan

B.Chan
Fight Against the Flab

Nowadays, obesity is quite a common problem in Hong Kong. According to a recent survey conducted by the Department of Health, the number of obese citizens in Hong Kong is skyrocketing, from 1.2% in 2007 to almost 4% in 2008. The situation is alarming so we should not watch it with folded arms.

The main reason for obesity in the city is the lack of exercise. Most of the adults don’t do exercise regularly, not to mention children. Under the financial tsunami, many adults don’t have an alternative but to work overtime. It is generally perceived to be the only way out to secure their jobs. As most of them are the breadwinners who take the responsibility to take care of their family, they might not have extra time to work out. For children, they are occupied with numerous homework and examinations. Although some students join extra-curricular activities at school, for instance volleyball or basketball teams, they usually have practice only once or twice a week. Is it sufficient for teenagers? The answer is simply not. Even though most of the students have spare time after school, they would prefer taking a nap or playing computer games. The less exercise they do, the fatter they become.

What’s more, unhealthy diet is to blame. Hong Kong citizens usually have inadequate time to eat, so fast food has become their unique choice. Fast food restaurants, like McDonald’s and KFC are ubiquitous in Hong Kong. Not only are these restaurants cheap, but also convenient. However, they usually provide customers with oily food, say French fries and chicken wings. If we absorb too much oil, not only will we become chubby, but we will also suffer health problems, heart disease and high blood pressure, just to list a few. How can we be slim if we still keep on eating unhealthily?

On the other hand, the ever-advancing transport is also a crucial factor leading to obesity. Due to the convenience, people travel everywhere by transport and seldom walk. The less they walk, the fatter they become. If they become fat, they find walking strenuous. Therefore, they would turn to transport again. At last, they will become obese and will be locked in the
Despite the situation, we can solve these problems in many ways. The easiest solution is for the government to launch some campaigns to promote healthy diet and regular exercise. The government could also provide citizens with more leisure areas so that they can have more places to work out. For citizens, we should also take initiative to do exercise regularly. It can be as simple as running for half an hour every day or doing sit up while you are watching TV at night. What’s more, healthy diet is the cornerstone to being fit. Schools should stop selling snacks and junk food, but encourage regimes based on the food pyramid. To conclude, if you pull yourself together, nothing can hinder you, including keeping fit. This is what we call self-fulfilling prophecy in psychology. Chubby people, let’s get back to the right track.
A Complaint about the Silk Road Resort

Andrew Wong  5E

Dear Mr. Man,

I am writing to express my disappointment with the facilities and the food quality of your resort. I visited your resort lately for a week’s holiday but left after two days because it was really a terrible experience.

My first complaint regards the hotel’s facilities, which were in a horrible state. The swimming pool was filthy with lots of dead insects and aluminum cans. There were also cockroaches crawling all over the poolside. It was also unbelievable to see a dog swimming in the pool. The unhygienic condition must be improved. In addition, the health spa, which was named ‘Heavenly Health Spa,’ was actually a building site. There was scaffolding beside the spa pool. Some building materials and empty cardboard boxes were discarded there. I could also see rubbish and dead insects inside the spa. To top that, the road to the spa was bumpy which was really difficult to walk on.

The thing that concerned me most was the accommodation. I was completely dumbfounded by the revolting condition of my room. The windows were cracked and the curtains were ripped. Rubbish was all over the floor. I could not imagine how I could sleep in a bed with all the dirty pillowcases, blankets and sheets that were torn. The wardrobe was broken and it was ridiculous to find that there were some shabby clothes left inside.

Finally, the food in the Fortune Restaurant was inedible. The noodles were cold when they arrived. The rice was as hard as a rock. Even when my father turned the bowl upside down, the rice still remained in the bowl. The vegetables were just like rubber, I could not cut them even using a knife.

I hope that you will take these complaints seriously and that you will improve the conditions of the facilities and the food quality. Because of your awful services, I demand a written apology and a full refund. If I do not hear from you within one week, I will have no choice but to contact the relevant authorities.

Yours sincerely,

B. Chan
The Undiminished Importance of School Education
Joyce Chan  5F

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction about the topic of teaching children at home instead of sending them to school. In Hong Kong, we have twelve years of free universal education, of which nine years are mandatory. The policy states that is compulsory for students to attend schools. However, some parents consider that home teaching can fulfill all the academic needs of their children. Notwithstanding, normal schooling is undeniably more than sole transmission of knowledge. I would like to write a few paragraphs to show the necessity of school education.

First, normal schooling is more effective and suitable for helping students to learn. The functions of schools are not only for students to learn from books but also to communicate with others. A school is like a society in miniature, facilitating students in collaborating. Students have competition among peers, from which they become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and thus be stimulated to improve themselves. Consequently, apart from knowledge, students can gain crucial experience and techniques from schools, including making friendships, learning communication and collaborative skills, and even sportsmanship. Some people think children can still learn well without schools, but it definitely does not work since one cannot learn the aforementioned skills from mere books used in home teaching.

Second, can you imagine what would happen to parents if their kids do not go to school? For many of them, it would be big trouble since they have to go to work and cannot look after their kids. Parents would be worried about what their kids are doing when home teachers are absent. Thus, it may also cause grave problems for society. For instance, adolescents without school would have so much free time that they may make undesirable friends, misbehave and as a result threaten the social order and stability. Besides, if they do not go
to school, moral education would become difficult. Though home teaching could be integrated with moral education, there would be a lack of opportunity for teens to put theories into practice.

Third, if we do not have schools, our economy would also be adversely affected. Our society may lack an educated and well-rounded skillful labour force since every single member of the workforce has only learnt knowledge in the limited scope of his/her own preference. Besides, if we do not achieve recognizable qualifications and skills, the future economy would also be decidedly affected, since there will be no official valid and reliable standard of reference from which employer can select employees. Some people may say that we could still have open examinations, nevertheless, establishment of the syllabus and education system would become complicated and confusing as every candidate may have been working on a different curriculum.

Home teaching undoubtedly has its advantages, for example, providing a tailor-made teaching schedule for each child independently, yet as explained, there is much more to acquire from a school, which is a mini model of the society. Furthermore, if we do not have schools, law and order and the economy may also be affected in a negative way. Judging from the above factors, the advantages of studying at school outweigh those of studying at home. It is clear that home teaching can never substitute a normal school education.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dear Editor,

The surging amount of news about drug addiction amongst adolescents has aroused public concern so the controversial drug testing pilot scheme was put forth. As a result of the lively debate that sparked off, I have kept an eye on what has been going on.

I once supported the government’s strategies. However, now, I hesitate, due to the disappointing revision of the scheme.

The revised voluntary scheme is no longer effective. Originally, compulsory counseling was requested if students refused to take the test. At the same time, the police took part in the scheme. After modification, the meeting with social workers is no longer mandatory for the students who refuse the drug test. The police are also excluded from the scheme simultaneously.

Under the amended scheme, the youth who takes drugs would never be prosecuted for doing so. The fact that they abuse drugs will not be revealed if they keep saying “no” to the test. How can teenagers be taught to be responsible? How can the scheme deter youngsters from drug dependence?

Statistics indicate that the number of young addicts has had a rocketing rise this year. There has been a drastic twofold increase compared with the previous year. Faced with this severe condition, the revised trial scheme is far from enough. To eradicate the problem, we have to address it at its source.

First of all, the police are an indispensable party in achieving a breakthrough in the current situation. As Kwok Wing-keung, chairman of the Tai Po District Association of Secondary School Heads, said, “Police intervention may be needed if necessary,” I believe that the police have to give a hand to deal with this in due course. Cracking down on the trafficking with the clues gained from the students participating in the scheme is what can keep young
people from drugs. Nonetheless, understanding the motivations which drive adolescents to resort to drugs is most essential, so as to combat the problem. Dr. Yeung, a psychologist, has analyzed the issue. He pinpointed the factors: curiosity, stress and peer pressure. The last one is especially the main reason. Teenagers are susceptible to peer influence. But actually, provided that youngsters have been instilled with correct values, they should not be persuaded to take drugs.

Education and the spread of anti-drug messages are the feasible long-term strategies. With the aid of educational campaigns and the holding of talks, the youth could understand the consequences of drug addiction. Besides, speeches could be presented by police officers, in order to be more persuasive and convincing.

Last but not least, parental care is of utmost importance in the prevention of the social problem. Apart from studies, parents are likely to impose pressure on young people with excessive expectations. Parents should try to communicate with their kids more frequently. I bet warmth from parents could avoid students going astray.

Honestly speaking, the problem of drug abuse has made me apprehensive. It deserves our full attention. We should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude and watch the situation with folded arms. What we need is not an impractical policy like the drug testing trial scheme. Pragmatic measures are what I am looking forward to. I hope that the teenage drug addiction problem will be curbed very soon.

Yours faithfully,
Chris
My Feelings Towards the Changes in Hong Kong

Evelyn Lu 5F

Dear Peter,

How’s your life in New York? We haven’t chatted for quite a long time since I came back to Hong Kong. I was shocked when I got back to Hong Kong last month. I could hardly recognize the place where I had lived for ten years. Can’t you believe it?

The first thing that stunned me was the changes in the environment. Do you remember the first year when I came to New York, I told you that Hong Kong had been suffering from serious pollution problems and I could barely see the blue sky? The situation had totally changed. The sky was so blue and clear that I even thought I was having a vacation in Hawaii. The air was so fresh and cool that I couldn’t stop myself from taking deep breaths. Exhaust fumes from motor vehicles and black smoke from factories could no longer be seen. When I went to the Tsim Sha Tsui Waterfront Promenade, I could feel the fresh sea breeze brushing against my face softly. It was incredible. Can you feel my happiness towards the changes that Hong Kong has gone through all these years?

The second thing that amazed me was the change in Hong Kong people’s living attitude. When I first got to New York, I told you that Hong Kong people lived a very fast pace of life. Almost all Hong Kong people put work and efficiency on top priorities. You could see people rushing in and out of the MTR stations and bumping into one another on the streets. Today, I was surprised by what I saw. I went to Mong Kok, one of the most crowded places in Hong Kong, in the afternoon. I saw people walking slowly along the streets with smiling faces. Many people were with their families laughing out loud at the little jokes they made. They seemed so relaxed and joyful. When I was walking among these happy people, I was totally touched by them. Their happiness and enthusiasm was infectious. I started to smile, too.
I was curious about what had caused the changes in Hong Kong so I asked my mother, who had stayed in Hong Kong while I had been studying abroad. She told me what had happened in the interim. She said that there was an economic crisis in 2010 and it led Hong Kong to a completely different path. Almost 90 percent of Hong Kong people lost everything, including their career, fame and money during the financial crisis. Hong Kong people changed their attitude towards life and cared more about relationships and families. Oh, this is exactly what I have been longing for since I was ten. I just cannot use words to express my joy and excitement towards these changes. Peter, don’t you want to see what Hong Kong is like now?

The only things that made me a little disappointed were the new buildings in Hong Kong. As population continued to grow, more skyscrapers were built in order to meet the demands of the people. As new buildings soared into heaven, most of the beautiful views were obstructed. It’s a pity, wasn’t it? It was a shame that most parts of Hong Kong had become a concrete jungle. Fortunately, I still found Hong Kong more lovable and pretty than ever. It was the love and care in Hong Kong that fascinated me.

I really hope you can come to visit Hong Kong. Come and be my guest. I am sure you will fall in love with Hong Kong just like I do.

Love,
Chris
Don’t Spoil Your Kids!

Alan Chan  5F

Good evening, parents. Have you ever spoiled your kids? Before you attempt to answer it, let me define what “spoil” means. It is any situation in which a child is in control but a parent is not. Note that! It is “a child in control but not the parent”. Back to the question, are you out of control to spoil your kids? Do you keep saying ‘yes” unconsciously to your children when they whine? Do you avoid letting them face difficulties and failure? If yes, you are spoiling your kids!

I am not saying that you should refuse all requests by your kids, or not doing anything for them. We all understand parents want to show their love and care to their children. As a social worker, I have handled a lot of cases about indulgence. My experience tells me, spoiling can ruin children’s lives. A survey from YMCA in March indicated most of the Hong Kong primary and secondary school students lack the ability to overcome difficulties by themselves. What is the crux? It is you, PARENTS. You love your kids, and spoil them in different ways and to a different extent.

You may “help” them to do their projects; send them to school or study with them even they already reach 10. I understand you want to find a path for your children with the least resistance. But these could only bring harm to them. “Failure is the mother of success”. These days, however, many kids cannot learn from failure and become mature because parents ruin their opportunities to fail. I understand that it is hard to allow kids to struggle and deal with frustration. But not spoiling your kids is the right way to show your love because you nurture a person who can try to fail but never fail to try!

What’s more, indulgence doesn’t help your kids to control their emotions. Parents are under the impression that they should love their children by making them happy, make them feel content. The reality is, responsible parenting involves knowing when to allow your child to experience anger, sadness and frustration but not bombarding them with what they desire. Pampering children does not mean you love them. So what should you do if your kid is upset
because he doesn’t get the birthday gift he wants, or refuses to stay up until 11 p.m.?

The answer is N-O-W now! ‘N’ stands for negative feelings. It is your duty to let your children face their negative feelings because if you give in every time they experience sadness or frustration, they may probably become self-absorbed. In the other word, you are helping them to accommodate the reality, in which they might not be given exactly what they want!

‘O’ stands for own. Just let your children make their own decisions. Try not to plan everything for them and give chances for them to be responsible for their own behavior and choices. So, they can learn a sense of responsibility and become independent!

‘W’ means want. We should always provide them with what they need, not necessarily what they want. There is a difference between want and need. An example of a want would be "I want to go out with my friends and I need money." A need would be, "I need money for a reference book." Children can get the two confused and say they need something when they actually only want it. So, as a responsible parent, we should learn how to say ‘No’ to our kids sometime.

Would you like to see your kids become all-round, well-developed and mature ones? Undoubtedly, not spoiling them is the only way out! Act “NOW”! Thank You!
Homeschooling is No Substitute for School Education

Eric Chow   5F

Dear Editor,

I have read a newspaper article about some parents who would like to teach their children at home instead of sending them to school. I am writing to express my opinion on the issue. To my mind, school education is better than homeschooling because schools help to expose children to the diversified outside world.

School education is undoubtedly more professional than homeschooling since there are many school teachers who specialize in different disciplines. They can pass on to students their expertise. Moreover, most of them have already accumulated years of teaching experience, so they can guide their students along their academic paths. On the contrary, parents may not master all-round academic knowledge and thus their children may not be taught and inspired in a comprehensive manner.

The school, which is a society in miniature, is an optimum place for children to develop their interpersonal skills. There are students of various family backgrounds and with different personalities. Children need to mingle and make friends with one another, during which they will learn how to communicate and get along with one another. The communication skills they learn and the social network they develop will be most useful when they join the workforce in the future.

Some parents said that continuous exams would bring immense pressure to children, but assessments can also make the students more motivated and competitive. Everyone may come across adversities and suffer stress in his/her life. When dealing with tension and challenges, they will become mature, tough and independent. Furthermore, they would be able to broaden their outlook as they learn to appreciate their classmates’ strengths and reflect on their own
weaknesses.

Taking into account the learning environment, the chances for building interpersonal relationships and personal development, studying at school is better than learning at home.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Shall Hong Kong Legislate for a Minimum Wage

Jasmine Chan 5F

During the economic recession, it is common to see news about family tragedies in the newspaper. The public then have a heated debate about whether Hong Kong should legislate for a minimum wage to help the low-income families.

Supporters of the legislation on a minimum wage think that it can help to keep workers in the labour market rather than force them to apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). It is found that people who apply for CSSA have low self-esteem, bringing a gloomy and pessimistic atmosphere to their families. This may lead to disharmony in the family thus tragedies may occur. If the workers are kept in the labour market, they can earn an adequate sum of money to support their families. The atmosphere of the family will become more harmonious and peaceful. As a result, fewer family tragedies will occur.

On the other hand, a minimum wage can provide a safety net for the underprivileged. Since workers are protected by a minimum wage, they no longer need to struggle with a meager wage. They can buy more food and clothes, and hence their quality of life will be improved. Also, they no longer need to worry about making ends meet so they will be happier, and fewer family tragedies will occur.

However, people with reservations about the legislation worry that a minimum wage will turn out to be a maximum wage because some employers may think that they only need to pay their employees the statutory wage. Some workers may then earn less than before so the wage may not be adequate for them to maintain their present living standards.

Moreover, some skeptics believe that introducing a minimum wage is a short-sighted move which can only bring about immediate but temporary
interests. In the short term, the salary of the low-skilled workers may be raised, but in the long run, it may lead to an increase in unemployment rate as employers may axe some jobs to minimize cost. They may even reduce their investments in the territory, which will lead to a reduction of job opportunities. Due to an increase in the unemployment rate, the job market will become more competitive. More skilled workers will compete with low-skilled workers in order to find a job. Hence, low-skilled workers may find it even harder to find a job. Eventually, the legislation will not be able to help the low-skilled workers.

In my opinion, the government should subsidize enterprises so that they can offer a minimum wage to their workers while at the same time keep their labour cost at a reasonable level.

In conclusion, the legislation for a minimum wage is a critical issue that requires careful consideration. The government should balance the pros and cons in order to help families suffered from the economic crisis to regain their strength.
The prevalence of drug abuse among adolescents has aroused much social concern in the territory these days. A recent survey conducted by the government shows that the gravity of the drug abuse problem is on the increase. What is more, most of the drug abusers are at the age of 16 or even lower. This pressing problem has stirred up much concern in Hong Kong. I am going to express my views on this issue.

I would like to start with the reasons why youngsters take drugs. From my point of view, the major reason is peer pressure. There is no doubt that building up self-esteem and self-identity are of paramount importance for teenagers’ growth. Therefore, most of them would try to act like their friends in order to gain more confidence. On top of that, teenagers lack maturity and are vulnerable to their surroundings during adolescence. Consequently, they may be tempted to take drugs.

Another possible reason may be celebrity effect. Nowadays in Hong Kong, lots of adolescents admire artists from the entertainment industry so much that they even portray them as their role models. However, those artists often fail to behave well and some of them are even addicted to drugs. The case of Jill and Kelvin Kwan is a suitable illustration. They were both arrested in Japan last year because of drug taking. Therefore, it may result in serious problems if teenagers just blindly follow and imitate what their idols do.

Of course, taking drugs may lead to severe health problems among teenagers. For instance, drugs may harm their vital organs and even cause damage to their brains. Under this circumstance, they may find it hard to concentrate on their schoolwork and that will adversely affect their academic results. Worse still, it may lead to death. Also, in order to get more money for buying drugs, some of the teenagers may risk their life by committing crimes such as theft. To alleviate the above possible problems, cooperation among the government, schools and parents is essential.
True, drug tests may help teachers to identify those drug abusers among all students at school. Yet, there are a few loopholes in the scheme. First of all, since the tests are not compulsory for all students, those who have the habit of taking drugs may refuse to participate in the test. At last, the scheme may be futile since the aim of the scheme is to help those students to quit the bad habit.

Apart from the effectiveness of the scheme, the lack of resources and money may be foreseeable obstacles, too. Since schools will have to employ more social workers to provide counseling service to students with drug problems, it may cost an extremely large amount of money.

To stop the problem from deteriorating, I think that prevention is better than cure. What I mean is school education is of utmost importance. For example, schools may organize some anti-drug campaigns or talks for students in order to spread the right message to them. It is because the more information they gain, the more likely they can resist the temptation of drugs.

All in all, the drawbacks of the scheme far outweigh the benefits. I suggest that schools should think of better solutions. If everyone in the territory can make an effort to help rectify this alarming problem, I am sure that it will be solved one day.
The Key is to Nip it in the Bud

Iris Lo 6A

The drug abuse problem among teenagers has recently hit the headlines. While drug use is rampant in Hong Kong, it has raised public concern towards young drug addicts. Parents and schools are obligated to work with the government to help further any policy that may help deal with the problem. However, the drug-testing scheme carried out by the government has stirred up much controversy in the society. Is it feasible to implement drug tests at school? And does it strike at the root of the drug abuse problem?

To address the problem, we must first look into the reasons why teenagers fall victim to drug use. As adolescents are impressionable, they may be easily led astray by peers and succumb to the temptation of drug taking in order to establish an identity among their friends. Besides, youth drug abuse has much to do with celebrity effect. It is not uncommon to see pop stars and artists under drug arrest. Young fans may blindly follow their idols in the mistaken belief that it is stylish to take drugs. Moreover, drugs are more easily available nowadays and the falling price of drugs are seducing more ignorant youngsters into taking drugs.

Unfortunately, teenagers have to pay a great price because of their ignorance of the dangers of drug abuse. It goes without saying that drugs are detrimental to one’s health and one may risk one’s life because of overdose. Worse still, drugs are highly addictive and you can hardly get rid of drug-dependence once you take them. As a result, higher doses are needed to satisfy the craving for drugs that requires a constant supply of money. This may lead to serious crimes and social instability as young drug addicts may resort to violence, theft or other illicit channels to get the money for drugs. Such a trend will certainly pose a threat to the healthy learning environment at schools as well as create an intimidating atmosphere in society.

In order to remedy the problem of drug abuse at schools, the government therefore has decided to launch a drug-testing scheme that has caused a considerable furore in society. Some people have grave doubts about the
effectiveness of drug tests while I strongly support the government’s proposal in the face of the present acute drug abuse problem.

Taking swift action to suppress the unhealthy trend of drug use among teenagers is of top priority. The drug-testing scheme can serve as a deterrent to drug use and educate students to stay away from drugs. It sends forth a positive message that drug use is unacceptable and thus helps create a drug-free campus.

Furthermore, drug testing highlights the importance of identifying drug abusers so as to render assistance to them to quit drugs at an early stage. Critics may raise the issue of invasion of privacy caused by the scheme. Nevertheless, there is no rose without a thorn. In an attempt to alleviate the problem of drug abuse, it is necessary to carry out drug tests as a tool of early intervention so as to guide young drug addicts towards counseling and treatment as soon as possible before the problem escalates. Therefore, as regards the urgency to tackle the problem, privacy is by no means a critical factor that should take precedence over youths’ health.

In conclusion, there are far-reaching negative ramifications stemming from youth drug abuse and the drug-testing scheme is a key tool to nip it in the bud.
In the face of increasingly rampant cases of bullying and violence among local schools, our principal has decided to establish an annual “Peace Ambassador Prize” in order to promote peace in the school campus. As you can see, Obama’s Nobel Peace prize has recently become an issue of contention worldwide. There have been vehement debates upon whether he is a worthy winner of the top prize. So, the qualities the winner of the “Peace Ambassador Prize” should posses seem to play a critical part in ensuring the validity and the representativeness of the prize. The qualities can be boiled down to the following three aspects.

First and foremost, embracing great courage and determination to promote peace in the school campus should be the prerequisite for a student to get the “Peace Ambassador Prize”. By no means should the candidate show fear for black sheep and the bullies. Instead, he/she should take the initiative to combat bullying cases and maintain peace at school. While violence prevails at school, he/she should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude but a vision of change for a peaceful learning environment. Taking Obama as an example, it is believed that he has brought profound changes to the world by pursuing peaceful diplomacy which has ushered in a new spirit of international cooperation and hope. His ambition to make a U-turn from George W. Bush’s aggressive military actions is the underlying factor explaining why he deserves the prize. In short, the “Peace Ambassador Prize” should be awarded to the one who has spared no effort to build up a more peaceful environment at school.

Another contributory factor is the age of the candidate. It would be more sensible and convincing to have a senior form student awarded the “Peace Ambassador Prize”. Compared with junior form students, there is no doubt that senior form students are more mature and capable of dealing with conflicts and cases of bullying. Furthermore, when we look into the fundamental reasons why Obama’s prize has sparked a public outcry, we can see that the short length of time he has been in the White House is the stumbling block that
drives people sceptical about his eligibility for the award. Some criticize that he
does not deserve the prize on the grounds that he had only been in office for
12 days before he was nominated and there is no guarantee if he will deliver
his promises aiming at peace in the world for the rest of his term as president.
To draw on Obama’s case, the recipient of the “Peace Ambassador Prize”
should be a senior form student so that we can seriously evaluate his/her
efforts in promoting peace for at least three years. Only time will tell if one is
determined to uphold justice and peace at school and thus worthy of the prize.

In addition, when it comes to the criteria for a competent peace
ambassador, having good social strategies also plays a significant role. He/she
should be able to deal with different groups of students as well as improve
relations between students and teachers. As a mediator, it is of paramount
importance for him/her to show respect towards different parties’ interests and
beliefs and resolve conflicts diplomatically. For example, the Nobel Peace Prize
winner Obama has made efforts in achieving better relations between the U.S.
and the other countries such as Iran and North Korea and in finding a peaceful
diplomacy on the basis of values and attitudes that are shared by the majority
of the world’s population. In parallel, the “Peace Ambassador Prize” should be
awarded to the candidate who can spread the message of peace and maintain
harmony among different groups of students around the campus.

In conclusion, a sociable senior form student imbued with determination
and a vision of change to bring peace to the campus is the ideal recipient of
the “Peace Ambassador Prize”. Not only would the prize encourage the
recipient to strive for peace, it would also enlighten all students with the
importance of harmony and turn into an incentive for them to pursue peace in
the future.
Bullying and violence are becoming ubiquitous among local schools. Thus, the school principal, who has been enlightened by the Nobel Peace Prize, has decided to establish an annual “Peace Ambassador Prize” to promote peace in the school campus. The required qualities for the candidate who is to be awarded the prize can be boiled down to three criteria.

The length of time should be considered as one of the criteria. The most recent Nobel Peace Prize was honoured to Barack Obama, the US president. However, he was in office only for 12 days before his nomination. By the time he was awarded, he had been in the White House for only ten months. Barack Obama still has not actualized all his promises and so his reception of the prize has stirred up lots of debates. Therefore, we should consider how the candidates are contributing to the harmony of the school campus by seeing, for instance, whether they are really bringing their promises to reality or they are just giving flamboyant speeches. Time should be taken into consideration when surveying the actions of the candidates in order to prevent any changes in one's actions and beliefs in peace. Mother Teresa had served the helpless people in India for almost her whole life before she was given the Nobel Peace Prize. Therefore, senior form students should be more suitable recipients of the annual “Peace Ambassador Prize”.

The second criterion should be their contribution to the maintenance of school harmony. Greg Mortensen, the previous Nobel Peace Prize winner, has worked against Islamic fundamentalism and opened 84 schools in the central Asia regime. We can observe his effort through these concrete establishments. The committee of the prize should then also look for the candidates’ observable contributions to our school. For instance, the candidates may establish a student association which acts as the bridge between the school and the students and facilitates the relationship between the two sides. Also, the candidates may work on organizing different activities to enable various groups of students to become more united. Only in this way can the annual “Peace Ambassador Prize” be more sensible. With observable contributions,
the possibility of having controversy over the prize will be diminished, and this can in turn prevent another heated debate from being aroused among teachers and students, which may jeopardize the harmony in the school campus.

The third criterion concerns whether the “Peace Ambassador Prize” should be awarded as a gesture of encouragement just like it has been done to Obama by the Nobel Prize Committee. There is probably an element of truth that the prize can be an encouragement for Obama, but the committee have ignored a deeper fact that the award was given too early. The award should be primarily given to commend the hard work, time and sweat the person has poured into establishing the peace of the world and then to encourage great achievements as a secondary purpose. Obama has not done much yet and the public still does not know whether he will realize his promises or change his policies. For that reason, it is not convincing, if not awkward, for him to have received the award. The “Peace Ambassador Prize” should be given mainly to acknowledge one’s hard work and subsequently as an encouragement. The committee must be careful to strike a balance between the two purposes.

The introduction of an annual “Peace Ambassador Prize” may promote peace in the school campus. It is because students may start to notice the need for a peaceful environment. Through the advocacy of the “Peace Ambassador Prize”, the awareness of caring for each other and the message of peace can be promoted. As students are being educated about the significance of peace, incidents of bullying and violence may decline and this will lead to a more harmonious school campus.

The importance of peace should not be underestimated. Peace is not something confined to the school campus, but it is also an issue that concerns our world. If we can promote peace appropriately by the “Peace Ambassador Prize” in school, it will have a positive impact on leading to a harmonious society and even a harmonious world.
Change? Perhaps you would reckon that I am going to talk about Obama, the US president. However, I am not. The word “CHANGE” has quite a lot of meanings. It usually involves the process of becoming different and it can be a transformation of qualities or shapes.

There must be loads of reasons when you decide to make changes. For instance, you have many habits, but there are good ones and bad ones. Bad habits would hinder your daily life. A student may have a habit sleeping late at night. Therefore, he may fall asleep during class and thus fail to achieve good academic results. Trust me, kick your bad habit, or else you will never reach the path of success.

Occasionally, you may be forced to make necessary changes by the environment. Let me exemplify this in detail with the example of a Chinese exchange student who went to England for further studies. Due to the new environment, she had to put aside her mother tongue and to speak in English constantly in order to communicate with the foreigners. It is undoubted that adapting to such changes would be quite tough and uncomfortable at the very beginning. However, as Obama once said, “Change is never easy, but always possible.”

Let’s think about it - things are changing all the time everywhere. Some changes take place immediately while some others take place step by step. If you mix the colors red and blue, the mixture will immediately turn into purple. Look up to the sky - every morning, we wake up to the bright blue sky, but as the hours pass, the sky gradually changes colors. There are four seasons in a year. From spring to winter, the weather alters steadily. That’s why you sweat in the scorching summer and tremble in the severe cold. Flowers and leaves fall in autumn, but blossom in spring with full vigor. It is clear that we can see changes everywhere in our Mother Nature.

What’s more, even yourself confront changes throughout your life. Try to
think about it: your appearance changes; your height, your weight, even the length of your fingers change. Not only your physical appearance, but also your mentality changes, too. I believe that you are no longer naïve when you have undergone the ups and downs in life, you will learn to become more mature. Right? Meanwhile, friends around you are unlikely to be the same. Every time when you study in a new school while moving to another learning stage, you meet different people and get along with new friends.

However, despite the constant changes, something remains unchanged. In the midst of so many changes, the love from our family never changes. No matter how rebellious you are and how you have broken their hearts, they will still stand by you and give you support. Have you ever heard of the story about the prodigal son? The prodigal son asked for his father’s property and set off to a far-off land. He spent the money extravagantly and ended up living in a plight. But when he returned home, his father still greeted him with his open arms and passionate embrace and accepted his son’s repentance. This story illustrates clearly the invariable love from our parents. That’s why I am always thankful for having such wonderful and understanding parents who forgive and accept me time after time.

This love is not restricted to our parents, though. We actually share the quality. We are living in such a miserable world, where there are wars and conflicts, but still, love exists even in those dark and hopeless corners. Instead of surrendering to the ever-changing world, people strive for a more peaceful and harmonious world by helping each other, by giving more respect and by showing care to each other. All these are possible because of the universal human love that we all share.

And yet, there is still a kind of love that is unparalleled by any forms of human love. That is God’s everlasting love. We get lost, but he never abandons us. We neglect him, but he died on the cross for us. We have sinned millions of times, but he saves us with his unreserved and sacrificial love. Everything is changing, but this Godly, mighty love is permanent. As the Bible says, “Love has the power of undergoing all things, having faith in all things, hoping all things. Though the prophet’s word may come to an end, tongues come to nothing, and knowledge have no more value, love has no end.” True, love has no end. The sky turns dark, flowers wilt, people get old, seasons change, but love has no end.
Revision to the Drug Testing Scheme

Kelly Cheng
6B

The drug testing scheme issue has stirred up much controversy among Hong Kong citizens from various sections recently. The situation is even more conspicuous after the scheme has been revised.

Undoubtedly, juvenile drug addiction has been a severe problem in Hong Kong. News related to this problem always hogs the headlines of local newspapers and magazines. The amount of young drug addicts indicates an upward trend. To tackle the problem, the SAR has strived to lodge miscellaneous policies and finally implemented the school drug testing scheme.

From my point of view, the drug testing scheme is worthy of support since it intends to eradicate the problem of teenage drug abuse. However, I am skeptical about the effectiveness of the revised scheme. Having revised, the scheme will work only if students’ consent is sought. Moreover, there is no police intervention anymore and students who refuse to take the test are not subjected to counseling sessions with social workers anymore.

If I ask my classmates, “Will you take the test if you are eligible to make the decision?” I am quite sure that nobody will cooperate. It is not the question of being drug addicts or not, but the question of being suspected. In the view of this factor, no drug addicts will be found by the scheme. Then, here comes another question, “How can we amend the scheme in order to make it work?”

Many experts from the educational sector believe that we can learn from the experience of international schools in Hong Kong. Students from some of the international schools are required to sign an agreement which allows the school to pick students for drug testing with “reasonable suspicion” before admission to school. These suspected students could be reported by their classmates or teachers. On the grounds that they want to help their cronies or students, students and teachers will volunteer the information. That is why it is viable for the school to look for students who are hooked on drugs and help them do away from the harmful substance.
In addition, extra-curricular activities play an indispensable role in curbing the problem. It is an undeniable fact that Hong Kong students suffer from tremendous pressure coming from different parts of their lives. Nowadays, adolescents need to face problems stemmed from academic results, relationships with families and acquaintances, etc. As a result, they may turn to drugs for psychological relief. Schools can avoid their students from taking drugs by means of launching more extra-curricular activities, which can effectively and healthily release their stress. Apart from helping students relax, these activities can also occupy students' time. Meaningful life can be sought from these campaigns so that students will not take drugs to kill time.

Last but not least, correct perceptions should be inculcated to students. According to the Customs and Exercise Department, the amount of ketamine confiscated this year has a twentyfold increase, compared to the figure last year. The reason why soft drugs such as ketamine are becoming more and more popular is that some teenagers believe that they are less harmful than marijuana and heroin. These ridiculous concepts warp youngsters’ mind, so education is the only way out to rectify their misconceptions.

The problem of drug abuse is absolutely jeopardizing the future of Hong Kong and its youths. We should join hands to crack down the problem.
Drug Problem Among the Young

Kimmy Wong 6B

Narcotics Division’s records reveal that the number of teenagers under 18 who have been accused of drug offences reached 751 in the first half of 2009 compared to 651 last year - a rise of 15 percent. Drug addiction among the youths has become one of the social problems which has posed a menace to Hong Kong. Whenever you read newspapers or watch news programmes, you may find reports about young addicts or drug trafficking at schools. The problem of teenage drug abuse is alarming and we should not watch the situation with folded arms. In view of the deteriorating situation, the government has devised a trial scheme on school drug testing in Tai Po district. However, it has stirred up much controversy in the lay public. The scheme has, therefore, been revised. Its effectiveness, however, is undermined to a certain extent.

The drug testing scheme has a deterrent effect. Needless to say, the scheme raises the anti-drug awareness in the society. Schools, parents and social workers are more alert to drug abuse among youngsters. Wong Po-choi, chairman of the Committee on Home-School Cooperation, mentioned that student drug abusers are also victims. With the precautionary measures, such as anti-drug propaganda carried out by the parties concerned, youngsters would be more likely to resist the temptation of drugs.

Nevertheless, the drug testing scheme is not mandatory now. Without full support from students, the effectiveness of the scheme declined. The Youth Union, YTalk! and Hong Kong Christian Institute have even called for a boycott of the test. They handed out 1,500 booklets persuading students not to join the trial scheme. There is also a signature campaign and class boycott action on Facebook to protest against the scheme. Without the participation of students, how can the drug addicts be identified? How can they escape from the addiction of drugs? The revised scheme is to blame for giving too much liberty to students, so the effectiveness of the scheme is undermined.
What is more, the drug test is too lenient without police intervention. The police will play no part in the revised drug testing scheme and no prosecution will be brought against the students who have positive results in the drug test. The Education Bureau has also mentioned that both subsidized schools and DSS cannot expel students owing to drug abuse. However, those who decide to take drugs deserve to be punished. They should not expect themselves to be exempt from legal responsibility.

To remedy the drug abuse problem among adolescents, parental care is of utmost importance for the prevention of social tragedies. Parents should take heed of their children. If parents can be more conscious of the symptoms of drug abuse, for instance, high frequency of toilet visits, anxiety and vomit, they can prevent their children from taking drugs. Psychologists stated that one of the reasons driving adolescents to take drugs is stress. Parental care and mutual communication can definitely help release the pressure of youngsters so the youths would not turn to drugs for psychological relief.

For the long-term strategy, education is the cornerstone of eradicating the problem of teenage drug abuse. According to the survey conducted by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups in September, one in four students said they would be unsure how to say ‘no’ if they were offered drugs by their peers while 1.2 percent of them would accept drugs to avoid upsetting their friends. The survey unveils that some students lack perception of taking drugs. As teenagers are vulnerable to peer pressure, the spread of anti-drug message and the correct value judgment should also be inculcated to students with the aid of relevant campaigns in schools. The government is also urged to allocate more resources so that schools can organize more extra-curricular activities. Students can discover their potentials and gain achievements through different activities. Their self-esteem will be boosted and therefore they will stay away from drugs.

All in all, the problem of teenage drug abuse has already posed a threat to Hong Kong. Eradicating drug abuse is not only the responsibility of the government; we should not adopt a wait-and-see attitude but work hand in hand to tackle the problem.
Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Who do you think can change the world? Nobel Prize winners? Jesus Christ? Or Superman? Will any of you confidently claim that you can change the world? I will. I can change the world. I am not kidding. Not only can I change the world, every of us has the ability as well.

Some may perceive that only great people can change the world. But that's not true. Instead, it is people who take initiatives.

Famous people who were able to alter the situations have one thing in common – they themselves were the role models of their advocacies. “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” is a famous quotation from Mahatma Gandhi. Mother Theresa coincidentally became a solid proof of his words. She realized the suffering of the poor. She then took the initiative to offer helping hands to the Indians. She switched her life-long career to propagate the message of love and caring in abandoned areas. She devoted all of her time and wealth to helping people in India. Her self-giving behaviour touched many people’s souls and millions of Christians are following suit. Her followers are still liable for helping people in need years after her death. Mother Theresa’s sacrifice indeed changed the world.

We can also see the same common characteristic in the Chinese world. Confucius, the advocate of the Confucianism, in fact had his every act be in line with his doctrine. Confucius was born in a turbulent period in China. He craved for change and wanted to make China a utopia. He realized that peace could be obtained only if people disciplined themselves and showed their kindness to others. That he understood changing himself is the first step to change the world made him well-behaved and considerate. His demonstration had a great impact on his students and other people in his time. Today, Confucianism is still embraced by many Chinese. If Confucius had looked down on himself and had not taken any initiative in changing the ancient China, we would not have experienced such a stable society in China today.
No matter whether it is in the east or the west, influential people observe the problem, have the aspiration to break new ground and most importantly, they take the initiative to change before changing others.

You may now murmur: we are neither Mother Theresa nor Confucius; we cannot change people’s mindsets and make changes to the world. Ladies and gentlemen, please trust me, you can. Juan Mann, an ordinary man, realised the lack of social connectivity at this age and decided to launch the free-hug campaign. He gave away free hugs to strangers in the streets, popularizing the selfless acts performed by a person for the sole reason of making others feel better. He was once the first and the only supporter of his campaign but now, the International Free Hugs Day is being widely promoted. Again, he took the initiative and inspired others to follow. He was not a tycoon. He was not a superstar. He was as normal as you and me. If Juan can do it, why can’t we? Many adolescents are complaining about the difficulties of changing the world. Among those teens, how many have changed themselves before changing others?

Actions speak louder than words. Only if we inspire others, more people will become our helpers in changing the world. We are the prospective leaders of tomorrow’s world. Let’s change ourselves today and change the world tomorrow.

Thank you.
University Education is Not Essential for Success

Julia Mak  6C

It is widely perceived by the lay public that university education is an essential element for success. This is not necessarily true, as success is a debatable term and has a different meaning to different people. To some, to be successful is to lead a prosperous life; to others, it is to achieve one’s goal. Yet a college degree may provide certain help, it is not a must.

“We are approaching a new age of synthesis. Knowledge cannot be merely a degree or a skill. It demands a broad vision, capabilities in critical thinking and logical deduction without which we cannot have constructive progress,” Li Ka-shing, the most affluent man in Asia, had once said. It was, indeed, very true for him. Mr. Li was compelled to abandon his education before he reached the age of 15, meaning he had not completed even his secondary school education, let alone university. For years, he had laboured away in a plastic trading company for sixteen hours a day.

Luck came in his way in 1950, when he started the Cheng Kong Industries, which is a real estate investment company. Mr. Li had proven himself to be a natural entrepreneur and after many years of diligence, became the wealthiest man in Asia, whom most people will agree as successful as well.

Apart from luck and diligence, facing the truth and following one’s heart may also lead to success. Jacky Long, a youngster and also proud owner of an online bakery, had only achieved four points in his Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination. Confronted by the fact that his talents did not lie in studying, he instead turned his attention to his God-given talent and his passion for baking.

After being trained at a bakery for three years, Jacky and a few others invested 150 thousand dollars to start an online bakery. The business was sailing well. By the sixth month, the bakery already received eighty to ninety
orders each month. It was no doubt a successful attempt. Jacky faced his setbacks head on and by developing his interests and having extreme determination, realized his dreams of being a baker.

Success can be brought on easily if you are a genius. Thomas Alva Edison, unprecedented American inventor of today’s many electrical appliances, had only had three months of proper education in his youth. Since then, he was home tutored by his mother. “Genius is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration,” he had said. As a matter of fact, those could also be the make up of success in many careers, no matter what they are. It was with these that Edison created the world’s first light bulb along with so many others.

Single parents that bring up their children by doing two or even three jobs can be considered successful. Love and care for their offspring can provide strong motivation for them to stand strong. Their goals will be to see their children grow up to be decent citizens, and when they do the parents will regard that as their greatest accomplishment.

All in all, the key to success comprises determination along with luck, talents, hard work and love rather than mere university education. As long as you manage to fulfil your dreams, no matter what they are, that is already a success. Many people do not have a university degree, yet they can still pursue their goals and lead fruitful lives. Knowledge may help you along the way, but you ought to have the determination to fight on the path towards your own destination.
To Go Studying Abroad or Not – that’s the Question
Julian Tam  6C

The living standard in Hong Kong is improving. Other than wanting to provide better food, clothes and toys for their children, Hong Kong parents also want to provide them with a better education and learning experiences. In order to achieve this, they are turning to foreign schools, the surging number of exhibitions about overseas education in Hong Kong indicates such a trend. Yet, is spending tens of thousands of dollars every year for foreign education worthwhile?

There are several reasons why parents choose foreign schools to educate their “greatest assets” including better facilities, a pure English-speaking environment, wider exposure to the globe, and stimulation with critical thinking. High-end facilities, funded by an expensive tuition fee system, guarantee a thriving school life; a pure English-speaking environment could greatly improve one’s spoken and written English and critical thinking skills would obviously help one both on academic life and one’s career. As for a glimpse of the world, as foreign schools usually have students from different parts of the world, this could not only give them new perspectives and chances to broaden their social circle but also show him/her how limited he/she is compared with people all around the world, thus he/she would seek for improvement. These are some of the many advantages of studying abroad, all of which I do not deny, yet certain severe downsides follow overseas education.

With studying elsewhere, racism is inevitable. As different cultures come clashing together and with different views about life, disputes and arguments are sure to break out between foreign students and locals. If they develop for the worst, it could certainly lead to ostracization and bullying. Such would put great pressure on the victims, as they may have no one to talk to, not even those who are closest to them but are miles away. Depression and pressure will not help children study however good the facilities or the environment are.
Adding to this, given the freedom and money, children might learn to be independent and spend carefully, but not every child would be mature at a young age. With all the money they receive from their parents, they might spend it unwisely on a materialistic life instead of an academic one; without control and guidance from their parents, children may not have a strong will to study or even make friends with bad habits: laziness, smoking, drinking or even an inclination towards breaking the law. With their children an ocean apart, parents would not be able to fully monitor their children’s situation.

Undoubtedly, going abroad to study is an opportunity of a lifetime. Yet, parents must not blindly pursue the benefits of foreign schools and play down the concerns of going abroad and the problems it might beset for their children. Most important of all, they must consult their children before making such decision. Albeit parents’ intention to give their children what they think is best for them, it may not do them any good. Understanding and communication are the answers to the question – to go or not to go.
Cursive Handwriting and its Fate

Emily Shu       7A

Looking back, it has been a long while my classmates and I have written English in the cursive style since primary school. In the eyes of Chinese students like us, aside from aesthetic elegance, writing English essays in the cursive style instead of in regular script has its bearing on academic study to a certain extent.

Just as what the author has pointed out, the declining emphasis on cursive English in school has resulted in cursive writing’s dismal demise. In schools, it is a knee-jerk answer that, when speaking of learning a language, listening, writing and oral skills are up on educational priorities but never is having good penmanship – as long as the words in scripts are legible and not too sloppy. Teachers teach to the tests, in which efficiency and speed in writing rule, while beauty and artistry seem to be superfluous relatively, prompting both neat writing and cursive English losing leverage. Having tests can be deemed as fighting in a waging battle, where wisdom and speed are required the most. There is no time for a candidate to carve the answers gracefully; rather, they scrawl on the answer sheets to win the score, driving them to pay less attention the loops and squiggles.

Furthermore, despite being downplayed by the author, technology has in fact held us back from having good penmanship and writing cursively. We cannot help but acknowledge that we are actually half living in a virtual world with online social networks, composing more e-mails and texting more messages. We begin espousing the use of emails and Microsoft Words because, in terms of neatness and efficiency, writing in computer is by all means more efficacious. Our words vary in style that we may scratch illegibly and our words are shaky and may slant in different directions, like the grass in the blast of wind, rendering it abhorrent for teachers to check the exam papers with ample kinds of writing style to distinguish. Thus, we are much encouraged to hand in homework online or in print, which deprives us of chances to hone our own style of handwriting, exacerbating the way we write.
But what is the point of fretting about its being on the verge of extinction? Perhaps handwriting will one day be supplanted by the ever-growing vogue of writing online – and that we may never frown on given the superiority of technology over handwriting, which has never been esteemed to be a static art. Nonetheless, having agreeable penmanship gives you credit for your impression on others. Supposing that you can write artistically, your handwriting will certainly leave your co-workers and boss an impression that you are serious at work and sophisticated enough to handle various tasks. If you write untidily, people are dubious about your real working ability. Likewise, to put it in perspective, “grooming” the way you write somehow reveals your demand for yourself in life! There is no certain theory that you will suffer if you have unpleasant handwriting - it is just an impression and you are judged right away!

Personally, I prefer writing by hand to typing. It is true that composing an essay or an article in a computer is much convenient for instant amendment and, due to my poor penmanship, homework in print is tidy for my teachers to check. However, typing my homework out certainly makes my writing lose my own characteristics in the paper. By reading someone’s works, we can feel or observe the “air” or traits radiated not only by eloquence and perspicuity of the writing but also one’s handwriting as handwriting always gives us the first impression of one’s work. If we type our homework out, the first impression will lose its influence and the teacher will have to look into it.

While computer has already been taking its foothold and handwriting should not lose its clout, perhaps we should build our own certain font in the computer so that we won’t lose our one-of-a-kind attributes while benefiting from the convenience brought by the computer.
The Ill-conceived Drug Test Scheme

Helen Chan 7A

It is heartbreaking to see the declining moral standards as more students go astray on the wrong track and resort to addictive drugs when encountering difficulties. The obsession may lead them onto the vicious circle and only concerted efforts can then be made to tackle the problem. It is sorrowful to hear the news of the Zheng Sheng College and students indulging into drugs there. As the pillars of the future, students should abandon their bad habits and embrace their bright future. Thus, the government needs to be persistent in implementing the drug testing scheme and find out the students who flirt with drugs. Unfortunately, I think the government is too casual about this and thus neglects the severe consequences of drug taking.

The ill-conceived scheme is not reliable. The policy may have errors and detect innocent students. The urine test is the least reliable way of catching a student because it can be substituted or tainted by other medication. This may stigmatize the individuals and even the reputation of a school. Thus, the scheme should be carefully debated.

More importantly, the scheme neglects human rights. The draconian measure obliges students to be involved in the test. The government does not consider the students' will and desires. Worse still, the police involved in the scheme may want to pick out the regular users. Thus, the students may just become suspects and be afraid of the acute surveillance.

Moreover, the scheme may pose too many hazards at the school. The school is regarded as a treasure house for pursuing knowledge without other intentions. Students' learning progress should not be interfered with the testing scheme. Nonetheless, if the scheme is implemented, many regulations may be carried out. The school may become more political. Students just want a peaceful learning environment, thus the school should devote all their resources to learning, and not the testing scheme.
Also, the scheme may have a detrimental effect on teachers and students. Teachers are the life mentors to inspire students. They show care about students’ matters. However, when implementing this scheme, teachers may become the executives and students may feel that they are being betrayed. Students may not chat with teachers any more and their relationship may be interfered with. Students may be frustrated because teachers do not believe students’ behavior but just show skepticism.

For the students, the scheme may stir up a labelling effect. Some naughty students may be treated as potential drug users. There may be much prejudice and then result in conflict between students and the school. Many protests and campaigns may occur to oppose the test and show discontent. On the other hand, the drug users may evade going to school because they are afraid their hidden secret may come into light. Students vulnerable to drugs may think they are not accepted and this may put them in a plight. Also, if these students do not attend school, then the social workers will not be able to counsel them. Thus, the matter may only get worse and not be tackled.

To cope with the problem, the government should not adopt the tough drug-testing scheme. The government thinks this will be a deterrent, but this scheme is not conducive to anyone. On the contrary, a softer approach should be adopted. More counselling centers and hotlines should be established to comfort the vulnerable drug users, and more social workers should be involved to counsel students about this. The government should have a comprehensive consultation to avoid another blunder.
Mainland China relies on industrial development to sustain its economic growth. Constant and stable energy supply is vital to the country. The most fatal problem is that Mainland owns considerable quantities of renewable power, just like wind power, but does not fully use it to help relieve the problem of global warming.

Mainland China has not made use of wind power mostly for the sake of economic development. Providing electricity with wind power requires a great amount of investment. Constructing wind turbines is expensive and the cost of operating them is apparently higher than the energy traditionally produced. These lead to the high price of electricity. Entrepreneurs certainly oppose to this practice or just ask for subsidies from the government. The authority thus perceives that it is not profitable to have this transformation unless technical advancement is attainable to materialize a diminution of operation cost. This manifests that the government still put economic development prior to environmental protection. Only by ensuring that the economy is flourishing will the government enforce policies beneficial to the environment.

However, can we truly achieve economic prosperity when sacrificing our environment? The answer is absolutely no. If the care for the environment is not enough and we always exploit it unrestrainedly, we will probably encounter nemesis from it. At present, the situation of global warming is getting graver. Changing weather patterns will significantly alter growing conditions of crops over the next few decades and also make natural disasters more frequent and severe. This will result in government spending more on rescuing and providing medical service to combat the disasters. More importantly, this will drag economic development and make all the efforts made in vain.

In addition, fossil fuels are limited and unable to replenish rapidly. If we do not transform the way of electricity generation in time, shortage, or even complete consumption of fossil fuels will come to reality. And at that time, the economy cannot continue developing smoothly and prosperously. We should not entirely rely on fossil fuels right now, since its remaining quantities are not
abundant. It is estimated that before 2050s, China’s fossil fuels will be expended completely. Considering the constant and steady development of the country, we should attempt to utilize renewable power to release the burden on fossil fuels as soon as possible. And it is hopeful that through scientific study, technical advancement can be achieved in the near future and we can gradually substitute renewable powers for traditional energy.

Undoubtedly though, renewable power usage plays an essential role in dealing with the problem of global warming. We cannot simply concentrate on it and there are much more actions we should implement to address it. The actions the government should accomplish can be systematically categorized in three terms:

Over the short term, the government must provide necessary emergency measures to deal with the disasters caused by the greenhouse effect, like establishing food banks to supply food during disasters and develop prevalent medical service spots through the country to cure diseases caused by global warming. This can minimize the adverse effects of global warming.

Over the medium term, the country must cut down its polluted emissions. The government should make investment in scientific study to enhance the quality of fossil fuels, which will be able to control the polluted emissions to a certain amount. Moreover, countries should hold discussions to negotiate the appropriate amount of polluted emissions and sign agreements to monitor each other’s progress. Global warming is not a problem of a single country, but the whole world.

In the long term, complete transformation of energy resources used should be accomplished. The government should put priority in exploiting renewable energy. It should maximize the investment in scientific research. There should also be an organization established by the governments to enable scientists to approach one another and exchange their experience and attainments in materializing renewable energy use.

Global warming is actually not impossible to deal with, if we can put it as the top priority. But if we continue to put economic development first, we will ultimately suffer.
Does Car-free Day Help Prevent Global Warming?

Ivan Law  7A

It seems that the majority of the public have turned a deaf ear to the city’s first Car-Free Day even though high-profile support is given by the Chief Executive and senior officials. The globe is getting hotter so when is the Hong Kong government going to get serious about this threat? Our electricity companies are churning out more pollution just to keep up with air-conditioning demands and at the same time causing permanent harm to our environment. It’s time to take prompt action.

To commence with, the legislation outlawing idling vehicle engines should be boosted. Just imagine you are one of the passers by on a bustling road and cars parked aside are still in operating mode. Exhaust fumes are being emitted in order to support internal hi-fi audio devices and air-conditioning at a freezing temperature. This not only exacerbates the problem of air pollution, but also deeply affects the health of city dwellers. Moreover, this policy will bring similar advantages compared to smoking ban in covered public transportation junctions. Since these areas are semi-sealed, passengers are forced to breathe in tainted gases.

Technology plays an important role in the problem as well. The government can subsidize the two power companies in Hong Kong to install the most advanced technology to reduce pollution and at the time a designated target percentage for yearly emission reductions should be mandated. In addition to it, the buildings in Hong Kong can transform into more environmentally friendly ones with the help of state-of-the-art techniques like installation of solar panels and solar hot-water heaters. Also, new generation of electric cars can be one of the keys controlling climate change. As the government has announced before, they would issue a tender to procure ten iMiev electricity-boosted vehicles for preliminary trials.
Last but not least, cross-border cooperation is effective in limiting contaminated emissions. According to an article entitled “natural partnership”, oceangoing ships emit and are permitted to emit pollutants with higher sulphur content under international agreements. Therefore, the government must multitask – while they prepare plans to drive down power and vehicular emissions, they must at the same time deal with ships. As the container ports of Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou handle about twelve per cent of the global container traffic, we should act hand in hand because of our proximity, and also because we share essentially the same investors and operators. And even if ships are heading for Shenzhen, many pass through Hong Kong waters and their emissions affect our residents.

To sum up, what Leung Wing-mo, the Hong Kong Observatory assistant director, who insists on jogging from his home to office every day, has said is quite inspiring. “Every day can be a car-free day in which I find double benefit by doing exercise and protecting the climate.” Measures dealing with climate change will be useless if people do not change their habitual behavior.
In Iran, a typical Islamic country, there are also students like us, wishing to live in outside that world, flooding to Western countries to study abroad, and formatting their ideologies to become more modernised. Is it good for the Iranian to learn from the West?

The greatest advantage for Iranian women to learn from the West is in striving for basic rights. Despite the strict dress code, designers are eager to design clothes for them. They hold surreptitious catwalks in underground halls, risking their lives under the censorship of the conservative government. They wish to reveal their talents and interests about what they have learnt and absorbed from the western society. All they request is an opportunity to make their dreams come true. They are trained by western education to think independently and strive undauntedly.

From the above, we can see a breakthrough in the extreme Islamic conventionalism. The government has to admit that westernisation has a certain influence in their community so that it can’t stamp out all of the changes. Even fashions in Qum, Iran’s emblem of conservation, have changed. Selling a simple T-shirt is no longer illegal. We can see a slight glitter of Iran’s enlightenment.

Hence, we can foresee the upsurge of women’s position in society. Followed by the relaxation in the dress code, women may continue to protest about having more freedom, such as occupational opportunities and political participation. The government may become more compliant than ever by giving into their demands. Though still restrictive, at least women’s voices may be heard to a certain extent.

Moreover, speaking as a whole, there could be a stylish fusion of Persian and Western design in fashion, which would add a sense of creativity. It may open up a new market for Iran to boost their fashion industry, thus stimulating their economy. Once the new style of fashion becomes prevailing, there may
be a greater demand for this Persian commodity, as this kind of industry is rarely seen in the western world.

However, learning from the West may do the women harm. Striving for more rights may lead to tougher oppression by the government. At present, fashion shows in Iran are still illegal, and the designers are risking their lives to hold them. If, thinking in a pessimistic way, the government is resistant to such behaviour, it may tighten the law which will make the Iranian women more easily open to be prosecuted, and the way that Islamic countries punish offenders can be as terrifying as we can imagine.

Speaking from the perspective of morality, learning from the West may cause Iranian women to have a higher propensity to openness. Extravagant charges of openness may lead to abuse. Common practices in the western world like homosexuality or drug abuse may start appearing and being accepted in the Middle East, where these things were taboos in the past.

More importantly, Iranian people’s attitude towards sex may become more arbitrary. This may bring about a lot more social problems, for example, abortion, single-parent families and orphaning. Many of the quandaries in the West may appear in Iran.

It is in the age of civilisation where equality is perceived as of great importance. Learning from the West modestly would be beneficial to the Persian society, but they also have to be alerted to the side effect of the invasion. It is essential to strike a balance in whatever we do.
Commentary on “Showing File on Rebiya will Not Cause Big Storm”

Bobo Yau  7B

There are fifty-six nations in China so it is understandable that it is difficult to achieve racial harmony. The street conflicts between the Han and Uyghur people have been sustained for a few weeks. Clashes are the result of discrimination, inequality and cultural differences that have combined for a long period. The conflict was triggered by the deaths of two Uyghur workers, who were believed to be beaten to death by Han workers in Guangdong. However, no matter who did wrong first, it is ignominious to attack others with syringes. The other Han people are innocent. If Uyghur people take personal revenge instead of prosecuting those Han workers involved, the problem will never be remedied. If Uyghur attackers express their hatred in this unbearable way, the entire nation will be jeopardized, as they will be labelled ruthless, uncivilized and violent. This will just lead to a lose-lose situation that no parties benefit from.

The social unrest is portrayed in a documentary about Rebiya Kadeer entitled “The 10 Conditions of Love”. Being regarded as a Xinjiang separatist, is Rebiya competent to mention and judge love? In my opinion, love should be unconditional, I wonder whether the movie truly reflects Rebiya’s attitude or is merely a tool to promote the separation of autonomous regions. The film is scheduled to be shown at the Kaohsiung Film festival next month and already has stirred up controversy. Even though the organizer emphasizes that the public should appreciate the film as a form of art instead of political propaganda, the timing of this ensures that people will associate the movie with the events at Urumqi. Additionally, Dalai Lama, who is believed to be a Tibet separatist, visited Taiwan earlier to pray for victims of the flooding, so some people may view the film festival as another goad to the Chinese government.

It is intolerable that some politicians gain political mileage through arts and natural disasters. As a form of art, movies should not be filmed for any political or immoral purposes. Fortunately, most citizens are not blind, so those
instigators eventually ended up paying a political price for trying to set up their political rivals.

If the Chinese government wants to solve the problem of racial harmony, open negotiation between Dalai Lama and Rebiya is essential. There is still room for the improvement of political transparency and freedom of journalism. Three local reporters were treated violently in Urumqi, which raised great concerns among Hong Kong people. Keeping the news as secret as possible is neither a feasible nor appropriate approach to cope with the plague. This may result in criticism from foreign countries that human rights and freedom are oppressed. Therefore, to eliminate any misunderstanding, the Chinese government should not cover all the truth. In my point of view, human rights and freedom are crucial in a modern civilized society, and it is vital that people do not abuse them. Everyone can enjoy these rights, but we should not use our rights as an excuse to cause turmoil.
Recently, three Hong Kong journalists were assaulted by armed police officers when working in Xinjiang. After a cursory investigation conducted by the Xinjiang Information Office, it says that the journalists gesticulated to demonstrators and were suspected of inciting a disturbance. The incident was startling as it slandered the three journalists. More importantly, it shattered the core value of Hong Kong culture and tarnished the reputation of China.

The accusation of being sensational is invalid. If they had done that, they would have violated journalists’ code of conduct, which is impermissible in the profession. If it was really their blunder, then people from all sectors would not stand out and corroborate them. The Liberal Party, and even our Chief Executive urged Beijing to conduct a fair, open and independent investigation into the affair.

If the three journalists were innocent, then the way the armed police prohibited them from reporting was an interference to Hong Kong’s core value – freedom of press. Freedom of press and freedom of expression are an integral part of our daily life and are two important cornerstones underpinning Hong Kong’s success. These freedoms are also guaranteed by the relevant provisions in the Basic Law. Thus, acts of violence or intimidation to the press cannot be tolerated.

Freedom of press serves as an indicator to the uniqueness of Hong Kong. Once it is in diminution, we will have no more advantages over other mainland cities. That’s why many Hong Kong citizens showed their grievances about the incident.

The matter has also aroused concern in other parts of the world. Since the July 5th riots, many foreign reporters put the spotlight in Xinjiang. When reading ABC news or Washington Post, we can easily find coverage of Xinjiang. The recent incident gives the impression that Xinjiang is a place where ethnic conflicts are frequent, people are violent and bloodthirsty and bureaucrats are
impervious to reason.

It also contradicts what Beijing promised during the 2008 Olympic Games. The People's Republic of China stated that they would loosen the freedom of press to reporters. By reading about how the police treated reporters, we can infer that Beijing didn't keep her promise. Worse still, reporters are maltreated, which can scare off foreign reporters and hence the credibility of China will be undermined.

The lack of transparency of the ruling system acts as a deterrent to foreign investors. Many international firms refuse to set up branches in China in regard of the notorious system. If China really wants to take a leading role on the international stage, then the Central government have to step up their efforts to improve the whole system.

This year is the 60th anniversary of China. Though the economy is exuberating, the free flow of information and freedom of press are still at the starting point. Three Hong Kong reporters were roughened up in Xinjiang, and the Xinjiang authorities cooked up charges against them when October 1st was drawing near. That will certainly blemish the nation's image.

Unassailably, developing the economy can help ameliorate the problem of living, health and illiteracy. But after they have done the fundamental, it is time the government enhanced the quality of people. Depravity and freedom of press should be on the top of the agenda that needed to be addressed seriously.

China has made a remarkable improvement over the past 60 years. Hopefully, she can keep on improving so that China can be an exemplary country in all perspectives.
The Consumer Responsibility Revolution

Bonnie Ho  7B

A recent survey has unveiled that during the Great Recession of 2009, the number of people who purchased fair-trade coffee, energy-efficient appliance and invested in socially responsible funds has reached the highest. It is startling as people are becoming more aware of society rather than focusing on their self-interest even during the economic hardship. It also marks the beginning of a Consumer Responsibility Revolution.

Consumers nowadays have become more fastidious not about the product but about the provenance. They avoid buying products from companies which are related to tobacco or child labour. They even boycott the company. For example, Nike had once been censured for hiring child labour in Third World countries. Subsequently, Nike made a regulation to ensure no child labour was hired so as to remedy the stiff curtailment of sales. In addition, the media coined a term “blood diamond” to satirize that diamond extractors are working in an extremely dangerous condition in Africa.

As a result of public coercion to protect the labour, many companies set up guidelines to protect their workers. For example, Gap, an American clothing and accessories retailer, put into effect a code of conduct for workers listing all safety measures. HP, a technology corporation, followed suit and enhanced its transparency of the global suppliers so that consumers can track whether they use “humane” products or not.

Alongside labour, consumers also focus on the environment. As the impact of global warming is becoming more remarkable, people feel an urge to protect the environment. Consumers replace old appliances with the energy-saving ones. In order to cater to the public, Walmart announced a “green” plan. It required its suppliers to reduce packaging to protect the environment and tried to boost sales of energy-efficient light bulbs by giving them more shelf space and better placement in stores.
Consumers tend to corroborate companies that take up social responsibility. Thus, many enterprises have commitments with charitable organizations such as UNICEF and Red Cross. Apple will start contributing 1% of its total revenues to the Global Fund that helps AIDS programmes in Africa. In Hong Kong, Giordano designated a collection of T-shirts to raise money for Greenpeace.

Companies have done a lot to improve their image and develop consumer loyalty. But the question is, how much of all these are just guileful marketing techniques to give companies a scene of Mirage. Meanwhile, the new term “greenwashing” is used to describe companies that spin their products as being more environmentally friendly than they actually are. Chevron is among the firms that have been sued for greenwashing, accused of undermining a bio-diesel project while attempting to enhance its green credibility.

To prevent unscrupulous companies from deceiving the public, the mass media play an important role. We rely on the media to discover and report those companies. At the same time, we consumers should develop a critical mind to analyse advertisements. We should not buy products blindly just because they are labelled “green”.

Needless to say, business nowadays is not just profit-oriented. Companies are talking about a triple bottom line-- profit, planet and people-- that focuses on how to run a business while trying to improve environmental and working conditions. More importantly, it is the fruit of the Consumer Responsibility Revolution.
Hong Kong has long prided itself on freedom of the press. That is also one of the core values the whole society espouses and should not be exploited. Therefore, it is not difficult to comprehend why people in Hong Kong are discontent with the recent abusive action of the Xinjiang police force. I know Hong Kong cannot be bracketed with Urumqi since there are differences in many aspects like law regulations, so I am not speaking against moderate restraint of foreign journalists. However, when the Chinese government on the one hand claimed that they welcomed non-local reporters to make thorough coverage, they on the other hand pinned three Hong Kong reporters to the ground, kicked, punched, tied and cooped them up in the midst of the mass protest.

I wholeheartedly appreciate that the Hong Kong government revealed firm support to those journalists accredited in Urumqi. Our Chief Executive, Donald Tsang, has intervened in the confinement of the reporters. Almost at the same time, a number of enraged legislators have issued letters of rebuttal to the authorities concerned. Xinjiang officials said those reporting activities were illegitimate since reporters didn’t hold or refused to show their press licenses to them. Of course, we were not the witnesses so that no judgment can be made. But in fact, news reports from different media have revealed identical truth that our reporters were just making regular reports, unlike what Xinjiang’s police investigation has mentioned that Hong Kong journalists were inciting disturbances and giving orders to the protesters.

In the meantime, I urge the government to ensure adequate protection is provided to those reporters. As we know, there is a string of hypodermic-needle attacks in Urumqi because of racial dispute and discrimination. Muslim separatists are randomly hitting Han Chinese with needles, causing some of them infected with virus. They undoubtedly pose a great threat to our reporters. In addition, it is somehow complicated for foreigners to seek medical help in the mainland. That’s the reason why it is necessary to send a medical team to Urumqi to handle contingencies.
Since there is a high incidence of overseas reporting, it is fairly important to set up a medium such as telephone hotlines for those reporters who are in dangerous situation to seek immediate help and temporary solution. This can be done by cooperation between the government and the Press Council to restore journalists’ confidence in making coverage in various places. Also, as what I have mentioned before, we cannot bracket any places with Hong Kong as law regulations are different. It will reduce the occurrence of rows and be more convenient for reporters if they have first equipped with brief understanding of the law of different countries.

To sum up, it is totally intolerable to witness that the rights of journalists are abusively exploited. Freedom of the press is one of the most vital pillars of Hong Kong and it is also widely enshrined by its people as well. I hope mutual communication can soften the attitude of the Xinjiang government so that similar incidents will not occur again.
Working in Mainland China – Your Step to the World

Hugo Loo 7C

Suffering the hardship of the recent financial turmoil, different Hong Kong companies have to endure financial problems and start to cut off the jobs in their companies. The Hong Kong job market has become extremely competitive and the unemployment rate of fresh graduates has surged on an unprecedented scale. In a bid to rectify the worsening situation, the Labour Department is recently collaborating with companies in China and offering opportunities to local graduates to work in Mainland China. In my opinion, it is an admirable practice and it is worth trying to work in China.

First and foremost, China’s economy is ever-booming. Over the past few decades, business in China has been rapidly growing to become the largest economy regime among different developing countries. The World Bank from the United Nations and the Federal Reserve from the USA have also predicted that China’s economy would become the biggest economy system in the world within a decade. Corporations and enterprises in China have boundless room for development; employees in those enterprises will have promising prospects for promotion. On the contrary, Hong Kong’s superior position in global business will be gradually replaced by China and the future of Hong Kong is indubitably uncertain. This infers that employees in Hong Kong would be confined to the uncertainty of Hong Kong’s future.

In the 1970s, it was commonly believed that Hong Kong was a springboard to the world. The situation, however, is different nowadays. Since China is estimated to be the biggest economy regime and goods market around the globe, various international corporations are attracted to invest in China. Some business giants, such as IBM, Wal-mart and Google have already planned to establish offshore sub-bases in China in an attempt to strengthen their service network in Asia. Meanwhile, they are seeking intellectuals, experts and university graduates from professional majors to manage their business in China. These giants often regard graduates in Hong Kong as highly desirable.
on the grounds that they are well-versed in various aspects. Undoubtedly, working in China gives local graduates a once-in-a-lifetime chance to enter the world-class corporations and obtain remarkable work experience in the mainland. Hence, China is bound to become a springboard connecting local graduates from Hong Kong to the globe.

Besides, working in China is indisputably an eye-opener. Despite the fact that Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China, our culture and legal system are at odds with those in China due to the practice of ‘One Country, Two Systems.’ Hong Kong and the mainland possess separate systems in the terms of legislation, business and culture. Therefore, working in a Chinese-based enterprise allows us to work under the Chinese systems and it can definitely broaden our horizons, since the business and manufacturing methods in China are unique and in a large-scale. Employees can learn the strengths and downsides of both systems of Hong Kong and China, thereby gaining a fresh sight in business.

Nevertheless, someone may worry that the pay in China is rather low and fresh graduates working in China may face difficulties maintaining close relationships with their families and friends in Hong Kong. I understand their worries, but in fact, the pay offered to fresh graduates from Hong Kong is often higher than the local graduates’. Furthermore, the price level of commodities in the mainland is lower, so their salary can absolutely afford their expenses. As a matter of fact, those graduates may even have spare money for entertainment and savings. With communication and transportation networks being well-developed nowadays in China, local graduates working in China can contact their families and friends by phone or via the Internet easily. For those who work in the Guangdong province, they can even take frequent inter-city trains to go back to Hong Kong, which merely takes less than two hours. Thus, their bonds with their families and friends will still be strong.

Facing the changing conditions stem from the financial tsunami, university graduates from Hong Kong should indeed jump at the chance of working in China and strive to step on this springboard to the world.
Soft Drugs Lead to Self-destruction

Cathy Shum 7C

In recent years, drug abusers, especially those who are at a tender age, are proliferating in Hong Kong. This problem is exacerbating and getting rampant. Chris is one of the examples. In bygone days, she was a studious student. Today, she loathes her stressful life, in which only cut-throat competition among thousands of candidates, piles of homework as well as ceaseless tests and exams can be found. With all these depriving her of her free time, she is in despair. Everything seems gloomy and bleak to her. To make things worse, with the lack of parental care and the instigation of her friends, she finally gets into bad company and starts taking drugs. Chris is not by herself in Hong Kong. Alongside her are numerous adolescents. Having realized its prevalence in the territory, it brooks no procrastination to cope with the problem.

Drug abuse may lead to a raft of problems. For instance, teenagers will inevitably lag behind their classmates and eventually drop out of school when they spend most of their time buying, selling and taking drugs. Their future will be marred. Even worse, female drug abusers are more prone to sex crimes after taking drugs such as ketamine and ecstasy.

It is evident that the current situation is far from tolerable. Only with the following suggestions can the rampant phenomenon be curbed and the youngsters’ healthy lifestyle be led.

In the first place, it is of paramount importance for youngsters to develop their own interest and talents in diverse aspects including sports, art and music. They can avail themselves of opportunities to relieve their pressure and gain valuable life experience. For example, they may devote some time to playing ball games, acting in dramas and dancing during their leisure time. They can also dedicate themselves to voluntary work, helping the needy and the underprivileged. They can also meet a lot of friends from all walks of life. Through these activities, adolescents can obtain a deep sense of fulfilment that makes life worthwhile.
Teachers and parents should also play a part. At school, the former can arrange some group activities for students. They should let students express their feelings and listen to their glee and sorrow. At home, parents should spend more time with their children communicating with them and showing affection to them so that they will not be led astray by undesirable friends.

The government can phase in the school-based drug testing scheme as a solution to the problem. This scheme can prevent non-drug addicts from being lured into taking drugs while at the same time identify young drug addicts. Therefore, this scheme can be a deterrent. After identifying the addicts, teachers and parents can work shoulder to shoulder to solve this knotty problem. Schools should also recruit more social workers to counsel those addicts.

Teenagers are the major pillars of our future. Drug abuse will only ruin and mar their precious future. It is hoped that Chris and all teenagers in Hong Kong can think clearly about the dire consequences before falling into the trap of drug abuse.
No Drugs, No Nightmares, No Regrets
Kelvin Tong  7C

Dear Editor,

For the sake of the future of our generation, I am writing to express my concern about the degenerating problem of substance abuse. The Narcotics Division has unveiled that the number of drug abusers aged under 18 rockets continuously. That teenage addicts are sent to hospital hits the headlines time after time. Even local pop stars, such as Kelvin Kwan and Jill Vidal, who were the spokespeople of Narcotics Division, are ironically accused of carrying soft drugs. Drug abuse has spread rapidly into secondary schools and even primary schools. To curb the aggravation of psychotropic substance abuse, therefore, is of paramount importance in public health issues.

Needless to say, drug abuse leads to lethal health problems. Consider the most prevalent soft drugs ketamine; drug addicts of this substance will suffer from impaired long-term memory and cognitive difficulties. As the government advertisements show, severe ketamine addicts have to go to the toilet every fifteen minutes. Why are soft drugs flooding our society? Unlike traditional hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin, soft drugs such as ketamine and head-shaking pills can be easily produced. Recently, police arrested several housewives preparing soft drugs with a microwave oven at home. The easily made drugs are much cheaper than cannabis due to the low price of raw materials which are available in local pharmacies. Due to the affordable price of soft drugs, drug abuse has started to be brisk and blatant.

In an attempt to solve the deteriorating situation, we should find out the crux of the problem first. Psychologists point out that adolescents try their first dose out of curiosity. Furthermore, the lack of parental support and love also adds to the gravity of the problem. True, if we cannot seek enough love from our parents, we would turn to our friends, no matter whether sincere or otherwise. With peer pressure, youngsters will become rebellious and finally form the evil habit in the pursuit of excitement and fulfillment of their curiosity. In addition, if adolescents are not content with their current situation, such as
being alienated from families, bullied by peers and having academic difficulties, they may try to take drugs in a bid to escape from reality.

Should the government want to stop the corrupting social values, police and customs can cooperate to crack down on the sources of the drug supplies. They should increase their patrols at the checkpoints across the border and double the random checks on imported goods in order to confiscate the smuggled drugs. Police should also double their efforts by cracking down on illegal drugs manufacturers and organize more raids at discos and rave parties. Meanwhile, the Legislative Council should amend the existing laws to stiffen the penalties for drug traffickers. In Singapore, drug traffickers receive the death penalty if they are convicted of smuggling drugs. Only with these deterrents can the presence of drugs be stopped.

The Education Bureau should allocate more resources to schools to spread the negative consequences of drug abuse and counsel the addicted students. Schools should introduce life education, teaching proper moral values to students on a regular basis. Moreover, schools can organize some anti-drug programmes to raise students’ awareness about substance abuse. For example, during the anti-drug week, a video competition or a creative writing competition can be organized to promote the anti-drug messages on campus. For the students who are hooked on drugs, more professional social workers can be hired to counsel the needy. These skilled social workers can help addicts to find the underlying reasons for addiction.

The government can build more drug rehabilitation centres, providing services for drug abusers to quit the lethal habit. The government can use Zheng Cheng College, which helps drug addicts to get back on the right track and return to society, as a frame of reference. After training the addicts, we should not punish them but assist them to live a new life.

Prevention is always better than cure. Education and prosecution are the only keys to eliminating drug abuse. Youngsters should make good use of their valuable time on meaningful pursuits so that there will be no drugs, no nightmares and no regrets in their lives.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
The New Form of Prostitution Must Come to an End

Olga Chung  7C

Compensated dating has become an unprecedented yet worrying form of occupation springing up in Hong Kong. Teenage girls date strangers who are commonly middle-aged and get paid as remuneration. The word ‘date’ here, however, does not purely mean ‘hanging out’. The dates which these young girls agree to go on inevitably involve intimacy. The common ones are kissing, cuddling and most likely, sexual intercourse.

This alarming trend was originated in Japan. Young girls would have their personal information including their age, height, weight or even body size posted on some local forums and wait for potential clients. Once they are contacted, they would compromise on the price with the clients, usually around $1,000-$1,500 and then start ‘working’. It does not sound like a decent job. That is why the girls who are involved in compensated dating naturally give the adverse impression that they lead an extravagant life – selling their own bodies for money and luxuries. But before you fist in the air and denounce their immorality, it is better to understand the reasons behind, so that according actions can be done to help curb the problem.

Teenage girls drift into this new form of prostitution because it is a quick and easy way to earn a lot of money. Adolescents nowadays need money so desperately because they believe money, though, is not omnipotent, can make them happy. They usually live in the absence of parents. It does not necessarily mean that they do not have one. However, making a living in Hong Kong is such a strenuous task that many parents would have to devote all their time to their jobs in the hope of making ends meet, thereby having very little time to communicate with their children. Communication happened to be vital in nurturing a child. Lacking attention from parents constantly and inevitably results in discontent with the family. To fill up the emptiness in their hearts, they turn to money. Unfortunately, it is also a common failing of the metropolitan to have the misconception that being rich is being happy, same as being skinny is
being beautiful. They believe that with the abundance of money, they can purchase everything from Jimmy Choo heels to a LV clutch. Enjoying all the material comfort, these naïve girls hope that they can be admired by their peers and it can in turn substitute for parental love.

Besides their desire for quick money, the decaying moral standards set by the mass media should also share the blame. Gone are the days when premarital sex was strictly prohibited and sex was widely regarded as the holiest part of a marriage. What people can see now is James Bond sleeping with different Bond girls in every movie on the big screen, or two male plastic surgeons playing sex games for excitement in ‘Nip Tuck’ on television. Through these obscene and licentious scenes, the holiness of sex has been utterly devalued. Without even knowing it, the audience is constantly fed with a message that sex and love can be considered as two separate ideas. With the idea being reinforced by various mass platforms repeatedly, young girls no longer perceive virginity as a precious gift, so they are indifferent about having sexual intercourse with strangers. In most cases, those girls who trade sex do not think that it is against morality. Instead, they treat their bodies merely as tools to make a profit. To them, selling their bodies is nothing more than part of the business.

Many of the compensated daters suppose that virginity is the only thing they lose. What they do not know is there is so much more than that. This practice could, indeed, place their lives in jeopardy. Most conspicuously, they could be infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhea, syphilis and deadly AIDS since the girls would have multi-sex partners who are potential disease carriers. Pregnancy is another concern when having sexual intercourse without proper contraception, leading to abortion or single mothers. Having premature sex would also substantially increase the possibility for them to suffer from cervical cancer and other reproduction-related health problems.

Moreover, the business highly increases the chance for the girls to encounter paedophiles and perverts, who may attack the vulnerable girls. A recent case involves 16-year-old Wong Ka Mui, who has been cruelly murdered and dismembered by one of her clients. The seriousness of the incident has alarmed people to look into the matter and urged them to work out solutions.
The problem should be solved by education but not by law due to the high extent of difficulties in enforcing the law. The school should place more emphasis on sex education and correct moral values by including them in the school curriculum. For instance, regular lecture classes can be held. Teachers may discuss with students the proper attitudes towards sex, love and money, so as to ensure that students do not possess distorted values. If such cases are found, it is important for the teachers not to reject them or else students may have adverse sentiment. Instead, teachers should instill the correct ideas into their minds in a rational and supportive way. Professional help rendered from social workers and doctors is without doubt needed if the situation is beyond control. As for parents, they may want to show more affection to their children and have better communication with them.

Compensated dating is a social problem that needs to be eradicated as soon as possible. Love and education is the key to hold these young girls back from going astray. It is hoped that the situation will be alleviated before another Wong Ka Mui case occurs.
Dear Editor,

Having been a hotly debated topic, the problem of drug abuse among adolescents in Hong Kong is degenerating as the number of drug abusers under the age of 18 is continuously on the rise. Parents of secondary school students begin to feel anxious because they do not know if their children are exposed to drugs at school. This threatening fact has also drawn the attention of all walks of life in the society especially teachers, social workers and government officials. In my opinion, this thorny problem deserves our full attention. We should investigate into the case and find some ways to call a halt to the disturbing trend.

Teenage drug abuse is mainly triggered by curiosity and peer pressure, the desire for peer recognition. Needless to say, another key reason leading youngsters astray is the lack of parental care and supervision. Except experiencing some moments of “high” after taking drugs, what come with drugs are the appalling and long-term consequences. For drug abusers themselves, this habit is detrimental to their body and health. Their academic performance at school will also be affected. For their families, the relationship between them and other family members will deteriorate. For their social life, some of their friends will leave them while other bad company will continue leading them astray. Worse still, they may resort to committing crime in the want of money to pay for their habit. As a result, if drug abusers do not quit this habit as soon as possible, they will bear the brunt of their action for the rest of their life.

To improve the current situation, the government should carry out the voluntary school-based drug testing scheme. Having been amended a few times after the proposal, from my point of view, the scheme will still fail to crack down on teenage drug abuse effectively. The scheme is going to be carried out on a voluntary basis only, which is certainly a waste of resources. Students who abuse drugs will definitely choose not to join it and it is pointless to test the students who do not take drugs. In view of this, every single student should be...
tested to ensure that drug abusers can be identified. Otherwise, the scheme will be of no use. If it is the case, then why do the government not just devote the effort and resources to arresting drug traffickers instead?

Having to instill correct moral values into students, schools certainly have a stronger role to play in coping with the problem. Vigorous campaigns should be launched to make students beware of the drawbacks of drug abuse. Moreover, social workers at schools should not watch the situation with folded arms. They should provide appropriate counselling services for students to deter non-drug addicts from taking their first dose and help drug abusers to abstain from the habit.

Besides the government and the school, parents are also vital for hindering their own children from going astray. Living with the hustle and bustle in Hong Kong, parents who have to work around the clock to make ends meet do not spend much time with their children. According to the statistical evidence provided by the Narcotics Division, the majority of teenage drug abusers begin to take drugs because they feel lonely and cannot receive any affection from their parents. It is always true that love and care are the necessities for every youngster during their age of puberty. Once they cannot find these at home, they simply go outside and make friends indiscriminately as they are not mature enough. Therefore, parents should provide adequate parental guidance for their children. They should also put themselves into their children’s shoes and ensure that their children’s feelings will not fall on deaf ears.

All in all, it is high time we prohibited drugs from being commonly abused. We are all responsible for guiding teenagers to lead a healthy and fruitful life. Only when the government, schools and parents take the above suggestions into consideration and act them out as soon as possible can the problem be tackled.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Helping Young Drug Addicts Turn Over a New Leaf

Stanford Yeung 7C

Dear Editor,

In response to the controversial issue concerning drug abuse, I am writing to draw public attention to an ever-worsening situation, the skyrocketing number of teenage drug addicts in Hong Kong. Thanks to the cutting-edge scientific development of our city in recent years, purchasing psychoactive substances at an affordable price for youngsters is no longer impossible. Rarely does a day go by without us reading any newspaper headings revealing new drug abusers at schools. Therefore, I would like to address the severity of this on-going scenario and make a few suggestions to remedy the knotty problem.

Apparently, the government has done something in an attempt to prevent the problem from deteriorating. “No drugs, No regrets” and “Not Now, Not Ever” are some prevailing slogans in the advertisements sponsored by the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau. True, the government has popularized the harm of drug addiction so that every teen knows the apparent drawbacks of substance abuse. However, does it mean that every teenager comprehends how horrendous the matter is and is willing to abstain from this pernicious habit? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Statistics show that the number of juvenile addicts has drastically snowballed over the past few years. If the government chooses not to do anything practical and viable, it will not be surprising that more and more future pillars of Hong Kong will be manipulated by evil drugs. Thus, we should not turn a blind eye to this potentially gloomy situation.

Recently, the government introduced the voluntary school-based drug testing scheme to the public and it is going to be implemented in December. Some may think that the scheme will work on the grounds that it can help us to identify juvenile drug abusers. However, in my opinion, it is nothing more than a mirage, since the word “voluntary” suggests that drug users at schools would simply refuse to take the test. Seeing little significance of and no relevance to
the scheme, non-addicts may be reluctant to take part in it. The policy is bound to be ineffective and fruitless. Consequently, if it is to be taken seriously, the first step we should take is to allocate more resources into this scheme and make it mandatory. In this regard, students will have no choice but to cooperate with the drug testers and be freed from the devil’s hands.

As a means to disseminate in-depth knowledge about the adverse impacts of drugs, it is feasible to introduce the subject Pharmacy into the “NSS” curriculum. As a result, the majority of secondary schools will introduce this new subject to the junior forms so that students can thoroughly understand the dreadful aspects of narcotics. Indeed, more than twenty high schools in California have already embarked on adopting some basic courses of Pharmacy, so it is reasonable for secondary schools in Hong Kong to follow their example. Compared to funding advertisements about substance abuse continuously, having Pharmacy introduced in schools will have a more effective, far-reaching and rewarding effect on adolescents.

Nevertheless, it cannot be guaranteed that the above measures can totally solve the thorny problem. In extreme circumstances, if the number of drug abusers escalates to an uncontrollable scale, the government should contemplate regulating the activities of drug abuse with appropriate constraints such as the dose and the type of drugs which people are allowed to take. For instance, in the Netherlands, taking a small dose of marijuana in a café is legitimate whereas thousands of notices and counsellors are well-prepared to persuade these café drug abusers to quit the habit. To a certain extent, this measure enables the authorities to impose certain restrictions to confine and rehabilitate drug abusers to lead a drug-free life as they can identify drug abusers more easily. Certainly, it is a radical measure to be used only in a desperate situation.

On the other hand, the government should furnish some ways for drug addicts to turn over a new leaf, giving out messages to them that it is never too late to mend their ways. Having discovered their prospective future direction, drug abusers will choose not to resort to drugs but focus on pursuing a more meaningful and profitable vocation. By and large, with the above measures taken by the parties promptly, it is beyond dispute that the situation can be ameliorated gradually in the foreseeable future.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Cease the Dirty Business

Timothy Or 7C

Last month, the police issued an earlier appeal when 16-year-old Wong Ka-Mui was beheaded and dismembered after agreeing to go on a compensated date. The brutal killer, 24-year-old Ting Kai-Tai, was sentenced to life imprisonment by the High Court in July afterwards. This staggering case has turned the spotlight on the gravity of compensated dating in Hong Kong. The term compensated dating is widely regarded as a euphemism for prostitution, as it involves accepting money for sexual favours. Recent figures from The Hong Kong Association of Sexuality Educators, Researchers & Therapists Limited indicated that the number of adolescents engaging in compensated dating is snowballing. What the figures truly reflect is that more teenagers are involving themselves in that seeming prostitution. What are the culprits for this distressing trend?

To start with, one of the contributory factors can be ascribed to the materialistic life the youth of today lead. As a result of globalization, a wide assortment of brands is flocking into Hong Kong. It is commonplace to see many girls on the streets wearing Lane Crawford dresses, carrying bags from Chanel, Louis Vuitton or Westwood and buying cosmetics from Dior and Covergirl. The dress-luxurious bandwagon has started to roll in Hong Kong since the 90s. Undeniably, for people coming from affluent families, it is not a big deal to buy luxury goods. However, for people who are born in grass-root families, they do not have sufficient money to satisfy their desire for material possessions. Compensated dating definitely offers an avenue to earn quick money for adolescents in pursuit of luxury goods. This one-off service can cost clients more than 300 dollars each time. It is undoubtedly a lucrative business which does not necessarily involve having sex. Teenagers may fall prey to this kind of shameful, yet profitable business because of that mistaken notion.

Financial crisis in the family can also instigate compensated dating. The recent financial tsunami has touched a raw nerve to people in Hong Kong. Many families have fallen into heavy debt and have been on the verge of insolvency. Many breadwinners have become unemployed because of the
cutbacks in personnel. For these impoverished families, their children may resort to compensated dating to earn extra money to make ends meet. Potentially-dangerous though this act may be, it is the path of the least resistance to get more money. They are simply requested by the clients to go out for a supper or a film. Then, they get approximately 300 dollars. To most immature teenagers, how can they resist this temptation?

As for those juveniles who have domestic problems, compensated dating is not uncommon for them. A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Christian Service indicates that most of the adolescents who do not have sound family relationship are more likely to engage in compensated dating. It is beyond doubt that the relationship of the family has profound relevance to the behaviour of the children. The chronic lack of parental concern may turn children rebellious. In some cases, children who embark on their jobs only want to gain self-affirmation. They want to demonstrate that they are competent to make a living by themselves and abandon their families. Moreover, family education is of paramount significance to children. The rifts between family members can be an obstacle for children to acquire an appropriate yardstick to measure against the desirable behaviour expected by their parents.

Last but in no way least, the prevalence of the Internet acts as a catalyst to this alarming issue. With people around the globe craving for a more comprehensive communication network, Internet technology has been advanced in leaps and bounds to meet the demand. Virtually, compensated dating originated in Japan. Due to Japanization, adolescents in Hong Kong are greatly influenced by Japanese culture, following young Japanese’ attitude and behaviour. It is now more accessible for teenagers in Hong Kong to browse through Japanese websites. Hence, they can easily get information about compensated dating and follow suit. On the other hand, the Internet is used as a platform to seek clients conveniently. Assorted advertisements can be posted on forums and social networking websites to publicize compensated dating service. With the help of the Internet, the practice is gradually gaining its popularity.

It comes as no surprise that compensated dating has become more acute than ever. All parts in the community cannot simply adopt a wait-and-see policy. It is essential for us to prevent this problem from aggravating. First of all, the
government is duty-bound to take precautionary measures. For example, the Education Bureau should introduce sex education at schools. The bureau can appoint different associated professionals to schools to give lectures on a regular basis about the pitfalls of compensated dating. The government should also provide the underprivileged with adequate pecuniary support. The amount of Comprehensive Social Security Allowance and the tax allowances need to be increased to ensure more people can benefit. Moreover, the mass media is obliged to inculcate positive messages about sex into young minds by broadcasting more educational programmes. To address this issue at its root, families should pay rapt attention to the behaviour of their children, trying to establish strong bonding with them in a bid to prevent them from going astray. With all walks of life working shoulder to shoulder, it is certain that compensated dating will no longer exacerbate.
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is my favourite place in the world. Perfect, polite and patient. Unique in every way. Understanding and ultra utopian. I see the school flag waving at me. Immense, immaculate and inviting.


Emma Lai 1A
Pui Ching

Pui Ching Middle School,
Unique and special.
I like studying here.

Come into the classroom with excitement,
Hand in the homework with fulfillment,
I can make many new friends here that
Never let me feel lonely, and
Go home with knowledge and happiness.

Zoe Kong   1A
Proud of you Pui Ching,
U are unique,
I’m so glad to be a part of you..

Caring teachers make us feel its home,
Hand in hand to go through the coming seven years.
Idealism starts its seed in here- my second home,
None of us will get lost, because
God is always with us!

Michelle Chen    1B
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is my mother school.
Uncountable students in the campus.
Impossible questions we can always answer.

Celebrating the 120th anniversary.
Holy God blesses us.
Impolite students we don't have.
Nothing is wrong.
Great! We are the students who study at Pui Ching.

Anthony Jim 1C
Pui Ching

Plenty of boys and girls walk on Pui Ching Road
Unhappy things cannot be found here
I studied and played over nine years

Come to play with me everyday
High School Musical is on show everyday
I go there by bus on time
Never be late to school
Grow up and be happy

Alicia Tang  1C
Pui Ching

Peace is always with us
United schoolmates firmly joined in love
Interactive learning environment

Can learn a lot with fun
Harmony is the spirit of our school
Intelligent schoolmates and teachers can be found everywhere
Never give up schoolmates
Get started and do your best as a student in Pui Ching

Tommy Chan 1D
Pui Ching

Pleasing pupils study here
Under the trees we do play
Inter-class competitions are always held

Champions are born here
Hong Kong citizens are proud of us
Intelligent we are
Now we are all ready
Going to make the teachers proud

Yanica Chan 1E
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is my favorite school.
And I love it too.
It is Pui Ching 120 years old.

Certainly it will continue and never be closed.
Happy birthday to Pui Ching.
And everyone are going to celebrate and sing
Never ever forget you.
Gather after we graduate, and we will all still miss you.

Brendan Lee 1E
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is a happy harmonious home
Under the good studying environment
Interacting with one another

Conquering difficulties and
Having accomplished achievements
I learn things -- as many as there are stars in the sky
Nine or more years in this school
Gaining all the necessary knowledge to fill my life with precious moments

Simson Hui 1F
I am

I am a naughty girl who likes playing basketball.
I wonder if I can be the best basketball player in the world.
I hear my supporters calling my name.
I see my family supporting me.
I want my basketball skills to make an improvement.
I am a naughty girl who likes playing basketball.

I pretend
I feel proud when I am wearing my basketball uniform.
I touch the sky - I am daydreaming that I am very tall.
I worry that my basketball teacher will punish me.
I cry when no friends like playing basketball.

I understand I need a lot of time to play basketball.
I say that I can.
I dream I am the youngest and best basketball player in the world.
I try to play ball games better than ever.
I hope I can have a great future of fun.
I am a naughty girl who likes playing basketball.

Cherry Tong   1A
I am

I am a sporty guy who likes playing volleyball.
I wonder if I can play volleyball for all my days.
I hear the bird singing in the sky.
I see a volleyball flying in the sky.
I want to play volleyball for all my days.
I am a sporty guy who likes playing volleyball.

I pretend that I am a girl.
I feel happy when I am playing volleyball.
I touch the volleyball in the sky.
I worry about the volleyball in the sky.
I worry that I can’t play volleyball one more time.
I cry if I can’t play volleyball.
I am a sporty guy who loves to play volleyball.

I understand volleyball is great fun.
I say volleyball is very funny.
I dream I can go to the competition.
I try to practice volleyball.
I hope I can go to the competition.
I am a sporty guy who loves to play volleyball.

Michelle Lee 1A
I am

I am a tiny yellow bird who likes to sing
I wonder what I, and my home will be like in the year 2029
I hear noisy sounds around
I see smoky sky above my head
I want fresh air and freedom
I am a tiny yellow bird who likes to sing

I pretend that I am the last lonely bird
I feel humble and blue
I touch the world with care
I worry about the environment
I cry for my home,
I am a tiny little bird who likes to sing

I understand the world is struggling for a better tomorrow
I say that we must work hard-in-hand
I dream of a green and peaceful world
I try to sing in the trees
I hope that people can treasure what they have
I am the tiny yellow bird who likes to sing

Crystal Chow 1B
I am

I am a valiant guy who likes superman.
I wonder at space secrets.
I hear the conversation of a rat.
I see superman going to my bed.
I want to be a superman.

I am a valiant guy who likes superman.
I pretend to be superman.
I feel power so that I can fly to the sky.
I touch good bat and night man.
I worry about my parents and friends.
I cry over the death of my granddad.

I am a valiant guy who likes superman.
I understand there is no superman.
I say that happiness will never end.
I dream of becoming a superman.
I try to learn about space secrets.
I hope to spread my love from hand to hand.
I am a valiant guy who likes superman.

Lipmann Wong 1B
I am

I am a “stupid student” who always feels sleepy.
I wonder why I am always daydreaming.
I hear the teacher’s voice but it’s not clear.
I see seven silver snakes dancing in the shiny sky.
I want to leave the classroom because the books seem so boring.
I am a “stupid student” who always feels sleepy.

I pretend to listen to the teacher attentively.
I feel free as if I were a big bumble bee flying over the trees.
I touch the sky softly but…
I worry about falling down from the sky suddenly…
I cry because the teacher has forgotten to say goodbye.
I am a “stupid student” who always feels sleepy.

“I understand it’s just a dream,”
I say, “But I still feel happy about it,
I dream to be a bee because I want to be free.
I try to stop daydreaming but I will be sad. It is because I hate studying.
I hope it can be stopped.”
I am a “stupid student” who always feels sleepy.

Ryan Tang 1C
I am

I am a lazy girl who likes cats
I wonder if I will be a fashion designer in the future
I hear god’s reply to me when I am praying
I see a cat swimming in the pool
I want a dream house as in the fairy tale
I am a lazy girl who likes cats

I pretend I am a fish swimming in the sea
I touch the water, the coral and the seaweed
I worry the sharks would eat me
I cry because I don't have friends
I am a lazy girl who likes cats

I understand that to succeed is not easy
I say that we are created by God
I dream that I can go to heaven
I try to do my best
I hope I can study well
I am a lazy girl who likes cats

Alicia Tang 1C
I am

I am a lazy girl who likes dreaming.
I wonder who I am and can be.
I hear the grass growing and the wind blowing.
I see a tiny little star in the sky.
I want to sleep deeply when I close my eyes.
I am a lazy girl who likes dreaming.

I pretend that I'm a writer who writes the truth.
I feel the true stories are floating besides me.
I touch my soft, light, magic quill.
I worry about the poor guy who cannot move.
I cry for his death until the tears become the sea.
I am a lazy girl who likes dreaming.

I understand that it is only my dream. But
I say, "I wish I can make it real."
I dream cause I like to dream.
I try to write something with my life.
I hope there is peace again.
I am a lazy girl who likes dreaming.

Angela Yuen 1C
I am

I am a silly girl who likes daydreaming.
I wonder what I will be in ten years’ time.
I hear a telephone ringing.
I see people working at their desks.
I want to explore my childhood fantasy before the chance flies away.
I am a silly girl who likes daydreaming.

I pretend to be a beautiful princess.
I feel everyone admiring me.
I try to touch everyone’s hearts with my smile, but
I worry about everyone’s jealous eyes.
I cry for all the lonely hearts.
I am a silly girl who likes daydreaming.

I understand that everyone has a kind heart inside them.
I say that peace should be in the world.
I dream that there is no war.
I try to help the needy.
I hope that all mankind can have a glamorous life.
I am a silly girl who likes daydreaming.

Hilary Chong 1D
I am a brave girl who likes nature.
I wonder what language the animals are speaking.
I hear the trees dancing in a fast rhythm.
I see the playful wind chasing after the leaves.
I want to have an adventure in the Amazon Rain Forest before it disappears.
I am a brave girl who likes nature.

I pretend to be a bird in the sky.
I feel the earth is full of mystery.
I touch the sun when it is smiling warmly at me.
I worry about the terrible global warming.
I cry for the endangered species.
I am a brave girl who likes nature.

I understand the importance of the food chain in nature.
I say that we should work together to save the earth.
I dream of travelling around the world.
I try to be a friend with the earth.
I hope the world will become perfectly pollutionless.
I am a brave girl who likes nature.

Lucie Fan 1E
I am

I am a self-confident guy who likes the piano.
I wonder when I will be a famous pianist.
I listen to attractive music played by Chopin.
I see a piano swimming in the sea.
I am a self-confident guy who likes the piano.

I pretend that I am Mozart.
I feel I will be a famous pianist.
I touch the piano which Beethoven, Bach and Mozart have played.
I cry for failing the piano examination.
I am a self-confident guy who likes the piano.

I understand that I need to work hard to become a pianist.
I say that I believe “Music can change anything”.
I dream of learning the piano from Beethoven, Chopin and Mozart.
I try my best in the piano competition.
I hope I can be the champion in the piano competition.
I am a self-confident guy who likes the piano.

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