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

4 January 2013
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.

January, 2013
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*Dr. Yip Chee Tim*

**Foreword**

*Mr. Edgar Cheung*

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As My Nails Grow Long

a play in parallel scenes
in praise of the age of 20, 
when all hopes and fears, dreams and tears sizzle

to the ONE who renews my mind daily, patiently

Only let us live up to what we have already attained.  
Philippians 3:16

Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.  
Franz Kafka
Prologue – <Que Sera, Sera>

[at the front stage, in the spotlight, with no background music, having steadied herself, NINA slowly sings, solo, with a tinge of sentimentality in her voice]

Nina

Tramp 1 – with a begging bucket
Tramp 2 – with a hefty hunchback
Tramp 3 – with dangling nails

Nina’s Mum
Nina’s younger brother, Samson

Passer-by, Mother
Passer-by, Kid

Gangster 1
Gangster 2
Gangster 3

When I was just a little girl
I asked my mother
What will I be
Will I be pretty
Will I be rich
Here’s what she said to me

Que Sera, Sera
Whatever will be, will be
The future’s not ours to see
Que Sera, Sera
What will be, will be

[as the last note vanishes into air, NINA stays still, eyeing into the infinite distance, and waits for the spotlight to fade out into darkness]
Scene 1 – A Day For The Tramps

[TRAMP 1 is huddling in a corner taking a nap. TRAMP 2, hunchbacked, is approaching the other tramps, ready to process the waste cardboards, occasionally whistling a tune. TRAMP 3 is joining the used cans with strings that are bundled up into a bulk. MOTHER, with KID, passes right in front of TRAMPS. Restless noise of the cicadas can be heard in the background]

KID: Mama, buy me a coca-cola, it’s so hot here …
MOTHER: Darling, I’ll get you some water, ok? [bringing a water bottle from her bag]
KID: No, I don’t want any water, buy me a coca-cola, mama … [KID coughs]
MOTHER: But you are coughing, darling.
KID: No, buy me a coca-cola, mama …
MOTHER: But your daddy won’t like it, and we’re going to meet daddy just around the corner.
KID: Coca-cola, mama, I want coca-cola …
MOTHER: [impatient] That’s enough, darling …
KID: Coca-cola, coca-cola, coca-cola … [KID chants, annoyingly]
MOTHER: If you won’t stop it, darling, I will … I will, look, I will send you to those dirty people over there. Do you see how dirty they look?
KID: Don’t, mama … [moans]
MOTHER: I tell you what, darling … [threatens, showing TRAMPS a condescending glance] … they love to eat naughty children.
TRAMP 2: Grr … [overhearing, makes a face and roars]
KID: [petrified] I don’t want to look like them, mama … what happened to them?
MOTHER: Do you want to know?
KID: Mama, they look ugly …
MOTHER: They did not listen to their mothers … and so their mothers punished them and sent them to the streets, and look, do you want to be one of them?
KID: No, mama …
MOTHER: Do you want to go hungry like them, eating only … cardboard and coca-cola cans?
KID: No, I don’t want to eat cardboard or cans …
MOTHER: So, will you be a good boy now?
KID: Mama …
MOTHER: Be a good boy now and we’ll meet daddy, and he’ll bring us to the park, ok?
KID: Really, mama? Great!

[MOTHER brings KID to the other end of stage, but KID occasionally turns to throw a curious glance at TRAMPS]

MOTHER: Oh, darling, let’s go, don’t look at them. [tries to cover KID’s eyes] They eat naughty children … [threateningly]
TRAMP 2: Grr … [overhearing, makes a face and roars again]

[MOTHER and KID finally make their exit]

TRAMP 2: Do I look like an animal? [turns to TRAMP 3, roars once more] Grr …
TRAMP 3: Yea, very much …
TRAMP 1: A dog! A noisy dog! Homeless and ugly!
TRAMP 2: What’s wrong with you? Just go on with your sleep!
TRAMP 1: Did you hear them? Ugly! You! Me! All of us!
TRAMP 3: Stop it. [keeps minding his cans]
TRAMP 1: Worthless! Look at you! And your cardboards! Do you eat them?
TRAMP 2: So? What about you? You don’t even move your fingers … except shaking that little bucket, begging for coins. Beggar! That’s how they call you!
TRAMP 1: What did you say? You want a fight? Come beat me, you animal, come beat me! You worthless animal!
TRAMP 3: Stop it!

[a juice carton is thrown at TRAMP 1]

TRAMP 1: Hey! How dare you! You really want a fight now?

[chuckles can be heard from the side stage]

TRAMP 2: Who on earth is that?

[another can is thrown at TRAMPS]

GANGSTER 1: I got him! I got him!
GANGSTER 2: Give me a try!
GANGSTER 3: Attack! Attack him!
TRAMP 1: Stop it, you monkeys! [noticing GANGSTERS]
GANGSTER 1: Come on, give him a head-shot!
GANGSTER 2: The target! Hit the target!

[GANGSTERS continue but start to flee as soon as TRAMP 1 and TRAMP 2 get on their feet]

TRAMP 2: Those annoying monkeys! I'd give them a good lesson if they don't run faster! And their mama will feel sorry for them!
TRAMP 1: And now you are talking ...
TRAMP 3: Let's clear up the mess, folks.
TRAMP 1: If you had a pair of good legs, you would run ... but you only have a hunchback.
[sneers]
TRAMP 3: Stop it ...
TRAMP 2: And what is so good about you? Loser!
TRAMP 1: Who are you talking about? [furious]
TRAMP 3: Look, here is another can ...
TRAMP 1: You want to start a fight?
TRAMP 3: Stop it ...
TRAMP 2: I will box your bloody head and you'll know you are a real loser!
TRAMP 1: Come on now then, you animal! Come on!
TRAMP 3: Stop it! Stop it! [shouts]

[light goes out quickly]

Scene 2 – The Girl Who Cannot Grow

[leaning against the windowpane and nibbling at her fingernails constantly, NINA, contemplative, writes at a desk, on which a few empty milk cartons stand. MUM, sitting face to face to SAMSON, is holding his hand]

SAMSON: Stop it ... [whimpers]
MUM: Look, my boy, look at your dirty long nails!
SAMSON: But I'm a big boy now, mother! I can look after myself ...
MUM: But the problem is, you never look after your nails. Let me finish this in a minute.

[MUM starts doing the manicure for SAMSON]

SAMSON: Phew ... that's annoying ... [groans]
MUM: What are you saying? You mean I am annoying?
SAMSON: No, I mean, the nail-clipping thing ...
MUM: You've got to learn to do it anyway, sweetheart.

[MUM continues with the manicure]

SAMSON: Mother, why do we have to clip our nails?
MUM: Well, because they grow. [amused at the question]
SAMSON: Then, why do they have to grow? If they don't grow, we can save all the trouble of clipping our nails. Don't you think it's a little silly? You let them grow, and then you clip them short, knowing that they will grow long again pretty soon?
MUM: But they grow because we are growing. You see, our hair is getting longer and longer, and you are getting taller and taller ...
SAMSON: Ha, yeah, and you are getting fatter and fatter.
MUM: Hey, mind what you are saying!
SAMSON: Sorry mum ... I mean, you are getting ... fab ... fab ... bulous.
MUM: You are forgiven.
SAMSON: Hey, but the thing is, sister is not growing.
MUM: Your sister is an exception. You know, for some reason, God gave her this gift of not having to grow up, just like Peter Pan. I think I've told you this before?
SAMSON: Alright, alright, mother, you've repeated this Peter Pan story a thousand times ...
MUM: And I'm proud of my daughter. I love her, whether she grows old or not.
SAMSON: Well actually, mother, how old is sister? I just can’t remember …
MUM: 18? Or 19? I can’t exactly remember. Go ask her yourself, she is in her room.
SAMSON: Of course, she’s always in her bedroom.

[SAMSON goes upstairs, followed by MUM]

[SAMSON enters NINA’s room]

SAMSON: So, are you writing your secret diaries again? [sneaks in and tries to surprise]
NINA: Hey what are you doing here?
SAMSON: Well …
NINA: How many times have I told you to knock on the door before you enter my room? You are a big boy now, grow up and show your manners, please.
SAMSON: Ok, I apologise. [reluctantly]
NINA: So what is the matter?
SAMSON: Nothing really. Me and mother were wondering how old you are. You know, your age can be confusing …
NINA: Well, my age? That’s …
MUM: That’s a rather sensitive issue, right? [MUM entering]
SAMSON: Oops, sorry, a secret to all females over 19 …
NINA: And I am exactly 19. You’ve got it.
MUM: Oh, no!
NINA: What’s wrong, mother?
MUM: No, then, you are turning 20 tomorrow!
SAMSON: Really? So it’s your birthday tomorrow?
MUM: Yes, it’s your birthday tomorrow, Nina, I just remembered!
NINA: Yes, mother, I’m turning 20 very soon … [musing, slightly melancholic] … although I always look like a 10-year-old little girl …
MUM: So, my sweetheart, what do you want for your birthday? Oh, I feel so excited now!
NINA: Well …
SAMSON: Sister, I can give you a … birthday kiss, if you want …
NINA: Well, mother, I’ve heard that … if you make your birthday wish and you tell it to another person too early, your wish will never come true. Is that so?
SAMSON: Exactly! You know, I keep making the same wish every birthday but it never comes true …
NINA: [curious] Just because you keep telling it to other people?

SAMSON: Yup.
MUM: Darling, what is it that you wish for every year?
SAMSON: Well … [jokingly] “world peace”!
NINA: World peace? This world will not be peaceful unless you stop telling bad jokes, silly boy.
MUM: And that is not funny. [turns to NINA] So, darling, what do you want for your birthday? Maybe I’ll buy you a birthday cake, hold a party for your 20th birthday, and … perhaps … help make your wish come true?
NINA: [expectant] Whatever wish I have?
MUM: Well, if it is within my power, of course.
NINA: Mother, it will be within your power! [earnestly]
MUM: Darling, I’d really like to see your every wish come true. Let’s wait until tomorrow. And as for now, ok, everybody, it’s time for bed! We’d better not disturb your sister, let’s go.
SAMSON: Goodnight, sister.
MUM: Goodnight, honey, have a nice dream, and you’ll be a year older tomorrow! Farewell to your teenage years! How exciting!
NINA: Thank you mother. Goodnight.
MUM: [while turning away] Hey, honey, but one more thing …
NINA: Yes?
MUM: Stop biting your fingernails!

[as MUM and SAMSON are leaving the room]

[light dims]
Scene 3 – The Long Nails

TRAMP 1: [exhilarated] Alright, alright, brothers, see what I've got here from a day's work! Ah-ha, look, what a lovely day! [fishing coins out from the begging bucket, counting]
TRAMP 2: [confused] How ... how could you earn so much in a day?
TRAMP 1: Are you jealous? [teases] Oh, what am I did you say? A beggar? Let me tell you this: better a beggar than a loser!
TRAMP 2: Perhaps being a beggar is ... really better. [murmurs to himself]
TRAMP 1: So, loser, what have you got today?
TRAMP 2: Perhaps a few dollars here ... if I'm lucky ... [feebly]
TRAMP 1: And what about you, my friend? [putting on airs]
TRAMP 3: Well, not too bad, really ... look.
TRAMP 2: He is easy to please.
TRAMP 1: Hey, hold on, but ... what is it?
TRAMP 2: What's that? Milk?
TRAMP 3: Right, milk.
TRAMP 1: How funny! I mean, does anyone still drink milk these days?
TRAMP 2: Ha! You see, only dummies drink milk! I prefer beer! [teases]
TRAMP 3: I used to drink beer too but now I prefer milk...
TRAMP 2: My friend, are you kidding me?
TRAMP 3: Milk is good ... but I just don't have the money for ...
TRAMP 1: Oh, we have a gentleman among us, and you never told us!
TRAMP 2: Forget it, gentleman.
TRAMP 1: They are only empty boxes. They are not bread!
TRAMP 2: If they are bread, you won't keep them. You eat them!

[some cans are thrown at TRAMPS]

TRAMP 2: Hey, hey, hey!
TRAMP 1: What is going on here?
TRAMP 3: Again?
TRAMP 1: Is that the monkeys again?
GANGSTER 1: Hurray! I've got him!
GANGSTER 2: More on the left!
TRAMP 1: Stop it!
TRAMP 2: You bloody lunatics! You hear us? Stop!

GANGSTER 1: Ashes to ashes, crap to crap! [chants]
GANGSTERS Ashes to ashes, crap to crap! [echo]
2 & 3:
TRAMP 1: Let me bust you and make you cry for your mama!

[TRAMP 1 grabs hold of GANGSTER 3 while the other GANGSTERS evade in time]

TRAMP 2: I've got you, monkey!
TRAMP 1: Look at the cut you gave me! Damn it!
TRAMP 2: I'd give you a bloody good lesson! I said it and I'll keep my word!
GANGSTER 3: Let me go!
TRAMP 1: D'you have anything to say?
GANGSTER 3: Crap, you crap, let me go!
TRAMP 2: Oh, you little thick-lip monkey! See how bad you talk!
GANGSTER 3: Get your dirty hands off me, crap!
TRAMP 1: What a filthy mouth! You know, monkey, you've had your day and it's time I have some fun now!
TRAMP 2: Come on, brothers!

[TRAMP 1 and TRAMP 2 start bullying GANGSTER 3]

TRAMP 3: Alright, alright, that's enough.
TRAMP 1: I'll teach this monkey how to talk right with his big lips!
TRAMP 3: Alright, I said it's enough!
TRAMP 1: It's none of your business, buddy! I'll have to teach this monkey some new trick and how to be nice to a beggar!

TRAMP 3: [shouts to his ear] Enough!

[TRAMP 1 gets his hands off to cover his ears, and GANGSTER 3 dashes away at once]

TRAMP 2: Hey, are you mad or something? I was going to beat him and make him cry for his mama!
TRAMP 3: It's too much.
TRAMP 1: Hey, I didn't know you are such a coward!
TRAMP 3: I just don't think you have to beat him that hard.
TRAMP 2: So you want to be a hero? You want to be a Spiderman? Coward!
TRAMP 3: It doesn’t work beating him.
TRAMP 1: Oh, we almost forgot we have a gentleman among us! Excuse me? What is wrong with your head? Huh?
TRAMP 3: You don’t make a man good using your fist.
TRAMP 2: What is it you just said? Forget it, coward, it doesn’t make you a hero!
TRAMP 3: You know why I let my nails grow? I tell myself that this fist never solve no problem. It don’t make you a man, a hero, having a big fist.
TRAMP 1: Excuse me, my friend, what are you saying?
TRAMP 2: What does it have to do with your nails?
TRAMP 3: [steadily] I tell you what, my friend … there was a time I had a lovely, lovely family. I had my beautiful wife, I had my beautiful son. But my son was a difficult kid. He caused trouble after trouble. My son brought me so much trouble and I wanted so badly to make him into a better young man. And so I beat him. I drink and I beat him. [starts to get emotional] I beat him with a stick and then I beat him with this fist. But he didn’t become a better man. He fight back. I want to make him a better man. So I beat him and beat him harder, with this fist. And I got drunk one time and I beat him half dead.
TRAMP 2: … So? [frozen]
TRAMP 3: So my wife called the police and I never saw my boy again. My boy was a teenager, and he looked just like that monkey boy. He must have been a grown-up now …
TRAMP 1: And that’s why you end up here, homeless, picking coca-cola cans?
TRAMP 3: That’s why I let my nails grow. I tell myself, I will never use this fist … to beat up anybody again, I tell myself, I have to be a good man, a better man.
TRAMP 1: A good man?
TRAMP 2: A better man?
TRAMP 3: Yes. Don’t you want to be a good man, a better man?
TRAMP 1: You mean me? But I’m only a tramp, a beggar …
TRAMP 3: But you are a man! Be a man, brother. [pauses, exhalas] Come on, brothers, let’s clear up the mess. [looks at the mess on the ground]
TRAMP 2: [pauses] Yes, let’s … clear up the mess.
TRAMP 1: [pauses and ruminates] Alright … let’s clear up the mess … [looks at the ground, then up the sky, and exhales] Let’s clear up this real, real mess …

[light dins]

Scene 4 – The Birthday Wish

[MUM, SAMSON and NINA are now partaking of their own share of the birthday cake]

MUM: What a mess, sweetheart, aren’t you? Look at your face. [helps clean up the cream from SAMSON’s face]
SAMSON: [annoyed] Oh, please, mum, I’m a big boy now, I can take care of my own face …
MUM: [incited] Do you call yourself a big boy? A big boy doesn’t behave like you. A big boy does not make a mess of himself, a big boy keeps his nails clean, plans his own timetable, goes to bed on time, finishes his work …
NINA: [interrupts, tries to calm] Alright, mother, alright, it’s my birthday. It is my birthday, ok?
MUM: [calms down] Sorry honey …
NINA: It’s alright, mother.
MUM: So … honey, happy birthday! Now you are a year older! 20 years old, aren’t you?
SAMSON: And you don’t belong to one of us anymore!
NINA: What?
SAMSON: You are not a teenager now! You are 20, you belong to … her group now. [gestures at MUM’s direction, giggles]
NINA: Alright, I’m not a teenager now, I know it, I know it. You don’t have to emphasize that …
MUM: But honey, I’m jealous of you, seriously. I’d really love to stay young forever.
NINA: Mum, you still look young …
MUM: Honey, it’s really a blessing that you never grow old, I mean, physically. When people look at you, they think you are only … um … 12 or 13, but … HELLO … you are already 20! Isn’t it incredible?
NINA: Mum, but I … [saddened]
MUM: So, honey, tell us your birthday wish! Is there any gift I can buy you?
SAMSON: Yes, sister, tell us your wish!
MUM: Anything I can do?
NINA: Well … um …
MUM: If it is within my power, I’ll do anything to make your wish come true! You know I do!
NINA: Well … mother, I …
SAMSON: Don’t say you want a birthday kiss from me!
NINA: No! Well, mum … I … I … [starts and stops]
MUM: Come on! It’s your birthday! Be a big girl now!
NINA: [inhalas] Well, mum, I want to go out.
MUM: [stunned and chuckles] You want to go out? Where do you want to go? The washroom? Or the kitchen?

NINA: [seriously] No, mum, you know what I mean. I want to go out of this house. I want to see the world outside.

MUM: [amused] But sweetheart, why?

NINA: I've been in this house for too long! Ever since I was a kid, I've been staying in this place, this little room, this cage, and I was never allowed to go out!

MUM: But honey, you know your problem! You know your situation is unusual! And going out can be dangerous for you!

NINA: But mum, I'm already 20 years old today. I'm not a little kid any more. I'm a grown-up now.

MUM: But I just want to ... protect you! Look at you! You are so small and vulnerable. You need protection, and you have no idea how dangerous it is out there!

NINA: Yes, I know my situation, I know I'm vulnerable, and I know you love me, but mum, I deserve the chance of seeing the world myself! I don't want to be imprisoned in this illusion of a fairy-tale-fantasy. I'm 20 now, I want to go out, I want to see the world, I don't want secondhand information from the TV, from the books, from you!

MUM: But you'll get hurt ... honey ...

NINA: But I want to grow up. I want to explore. It may be a wonderful world out there, or it may be ugly; it may be a place of hopes and dreams, or it may just be a complete mess, but I don't care, 'cause that is the only reality, the only world I should be living in!

[silence. SAMSON claps his hands]

MUM: What are you doing?

SAMSON: What a speech, sister. I'm proud of you.

[the three look at each other, in silence]

MUM: So ... that is your birthday wish ...

NINA: Yes ...

MUM: To go out ... of this house ...

NINA: [nods] Yes ...

MUM: And see the world ... yourself ...

NINA: [gets bolder] Yes, yes, yes ...

MUM: [pauses, then reluctantly] Alright. Off you go, then ...

NINA: [overjoyed, embraces MUM] Really? Thank you, mum!

SAMSON: Hurray, hurray, hurray!

NINA: Mum, thank you so much! This must be the happiest birthday I've ever had!

MUM: Hey, honey, but one more thing ...

NINA: Yes?

MUM: Stop biting your fingernails!

NINA: Well ... sorry mother ...

MUM: Darling, if I let you go, will you promise to stop that?

NINA: [hesitates, then firmly] If you let me go, mum, I promise, I will never nibble my nails again!

MUM: Promise?

NINA: Promise!

SAMSON: [teases] Yes ... you are a big girl now ...

MUM: [joins] Yes, a big girl now!

NINA: Yes, I am a big girl now!

[light dims]
Epilogue – When They Meet

[NINA strolls along the street, by herself, looking here and there, drawing closer to TRAMPS, who are making their living, mindless of her existence. NINA stops by and touches the cardboard signs that belong to TRAMP 2]

TRAMP 2: [annoyed] Hey, little girl, do I know you?
NINA: Oh, sorry, sir ...
TRAMP 2: Grr ... What are you doing?
NINA: I'm just curious. This looks ... cute ... [looking at the cardboard signs]
TRAMP 2: [angry] Cute? You never saw this before?
NINA: No, never ... what ... what is this?
TRAMP 2: This is my food, my daily bread, little girl!
NINA: So do you mean you eat this?
TRAMP 2: Bugger off, little girl! You know nothing, do you? Stop bothering and get out!

[TRAMP 1 is woken up by the noise, while the frightened NINA steps back, bumping into TRAMP 3]

TRAMP 1: Hey, what's the matter, pretty?
NINA: [to TRAMP 3] Nice to meet you, sir ...
TRAMP 3: Are you talking to me?
NINA: Yes, nice to meet you, sir ... [offering her hand]
TRAMP 3: I don't know you ...
NINA: What is this? [looking at the cans and cartons]
TRAMP 3: This is my job.
NINA: Your job? [noticing the long nails] Hey, I like your job, and I like your fingernails!
TRAMP 3: My fingernails?
TRAMP 1: Yes, he is a Spiderman!
NINA: Yes, they look cute.
TRAMP 3: Arent you afraid of my nails?
NINA: Why should I be afraid? They are just a bit long, and in fact, they look cute!
TRAMP 3: [intrigued] You look cute too, little girl ...
NINA: Hey, How does it feel to have such long nails?
TRAMP 3: [embarrassed] Well ... um ...
TRAMP 1: Hey pretty, do you have any questions for me?
NINA: Can I shake your hand? I want to touch your long nails. [offering her hand]

TRAMP 1: Give her your hand, brother. The lady is offering her hand!
TRAMP 2: Yes, be a gentleman!

[with some difficulty, TRAMP 3 offers his hand, but drops his cans and cartons when they touch hands]

NINA: Oops ... let me help you ...

[NINA bends down and picks up the cans, noticing the milk cartons]

TRAMP 3: Thank you, little girl.
NINA: Do you drink milk too?
TRAMP 3: No, I don't. I don't have any money to buy milk. And you know what, little girl, nobody drink milk these days.
NINA: I do! I drink milk every night!
TRAMP 3: Really?
NINA: Yes! Mum says I should drink more milk if I want to grow up!
TRAMP 1: [teases] Pretty, growing up is not such a sweet thing.
TRAMP 2: Haha ... you know nothing, little girl ...
TRAMP 1: Yeah, growing up is tough.
TRAMP 2: Yeah, this life is tough.
TRAMP 3: Hey, what's wrong with your nails? [notices NINA's nails]
NINA: My nails?
TRAMP 3: You've got pretty hands, little girl ... but what's wrong with your nails?
NINA: [embarrassed] ... well ... I bite them ...
TRAMP 3: Oh, you should stop doing that to your pretty hands.
NINA: Yes, you are right. And I've promised my mum never to nibble my nails again. I'm a big girl now, I should grow up and learn to look after myself. As you said, this life can be tough, and I've got to look after myself.
TRAMP 3: [amused] You talk like an adult. Hey, little girl, how old are you?
NINA: Me? I'm 20!
TRAMP 3: [stunned] What? 20?
NINA: Yes, I was 19 yesterday, and I have my birthday today, so I am 20. Simple math.
TRAMP 3: So, you mean you are a grown up now? You joking?
NINA: No! Why do you look so surprised?
TRAMP 3: Well ... look at you ...
NINA: [interrupts] So, what about you?
TRAMP 3: Me?
NINA: Yes! How old are you?
TRAMP 3: Well … I don’t know … I guess … I’m old now … I guess … I’m almost 50 now …
NINA: [surprised] 50 years old?
TRAMP 3: Yea …
NINA: [surprised] You are really old!
NINA: [bewildered] What? Young again? How is it possible?
TRAMP 3: It is possible.
NINA: Why? How can you be young again? You are old!
TRAMP 3: Little girl, when you grow up, you will know … that it’s possible … to be young again.

[slowly and tenderly, TRAMP 3 takes NINA’s hand]

[music fades in, <Que Sera, Sera>]
[tight dims]
[curtain]
A Disaster on Pegasus

Anthony Cheung 1A

There was a planet called Pegasus. The environment on Pegasus was similar to that of the Earth’s. On Pegasus, there lived a pair of twins, Martin and Joshua. Martin and Joshua had short hair, sharp eyes and tall statures. They were also handsome, kind and brave.

One day, Martin and Joshua went to the beach to swim in the graceful sea together. While they were swimming in the sea, a waterspout suddenly appeared. The spout was extremely powerful. It sucked the twins up into the sky. After a few seconds, Martin fell back into the sea. He was able to swim to shore before he passed out.

When he woke up, he looked around. He was shocked at what he saw. The once beautiful beach, the clear blue waters of the sea, the wonderful forests and the blue sky had all disappeared. All that remained was a smoky sky and a dirty, muddy sea.

At that moment, he saw two teenagers walking along the beach. He asked them, “What has happened here?” The two teenagers replied, “You don’t know? This planet is occupied by the Devil King – Joshua.”

Martin was very confused. He couldn’t believe that his twin brother had become the Devil King. As the teenagers left, he started to cry.

While he was crying, a mysterious man walked towards him. Martin stopped crying and asked, “What do you want from me?”
“My name is Anthony and I am a magician. I have been waiting for you for a long time. You have been asleep for 1000 years. While you have slept, your twin, the Devil King, has ruled this world. He is being controlled by a demon. If you defeat him with magic, your brother will be freed from the demon’s control and this world will regain it pristine beauty”, the Anthony explained.

Martin the asked, “Why me? Why am I the one to do this?”

Anthony replied, “Because you are the Chosen One. It is your destiny to confront and defeat the Devil King.”

In the following 10 years, Martin learnt magic from Anthony. Martin became stronger and stronger until one day he even defeated Anthony with magic. It was at this point that Anthony decided that Martin was ready to face the Devil King. Anthony gave Martin a book of spells and said, “This is the most powerful book of spells in the universe. Only the Chosen One can control the spells within it. Now go, defeat the Devil King and fulfill your destiny.”

After a few weeks of travel, Martin finally reached the Devil King’s castle. The castle was full of fear and despair. Although Martin was scared, he continued deep in the castle because he wanted to save his brother and the planet.

When he entered the Devil King’s throne room, a team of ghost soldiers attacked appeared out of thin air. Martin shivered and thought, “How can I possible defeat them?” But then, a voice in the back of his head spoke to him and said, “Remember your training. You are the Chosen One.” As soon as this thought came to him, a powerful bolt of magical energy leapt from his hands and flew towards the ghost soldiers. It struck all of the soldiers at the same time. They instantly stopped walking towards him and vanished.

Martin continued to fight creature after creature. Destroying every one of them with his magic. Finally, a black hole appeared and materialized in front of him and the devil King stepped came out of it. The Devil King cast some demon magic towards Martin. Black shadow balls flew towards Martin but Martin cast a defensive spell, which deflected the shadow balls. Then, Martin cast an ice spell that formed a blizzard around the Devil King. This froze the Devil King. Then, Martin cast a fireball spell and the Devil King disappeared in a sea of flames, leaving Joshua lying on the floor.

Martin ran to Joshua and realised that he was dying. Martin then used all of his life power to cast his final spell – the Spell of Rejuvenation. The spell was the most powerful spell that he had mastered. It could rejuvenate anything but there was one side effect to this – the spellcaster would die.

In the end, Martin had sacrificed himself but it was not in vain. By doing so he saved his brother and the planet. Pegasus would forever remember the deeds of “Martin the Great”. 
A Letter to an Old Classmate
Kevin Tsang 1A

Dear Jenny,

How are you? I haven’t seen you for a long time. I am so happy to receive your letter. You said that you had met many new friends at your new school. Tell me more about them. Do you find it strange to study at a girls’ school?

During the summer holidays, my family and I went to Macau. We visited many new tourist spots and took a lot of photos. Check them out on my Facebook albums. Last time, you asked me to tell you more about my new secondary school. Well, it’s hard to describe. You have to come back and visit us. In short, Pui Ching is a great secondary school. It’s a pity that you had to leave us after completing primary school.

I have met many new classmates who came from different primary schools. Last week, we went to a 3-day training camp. It was a fun-filled training camp. How contradicting it was because we thought it would be a tough camp. But we have learnt many new things, especially the importance of cooperation and organization. Also, I have joined the Red Cross and the Tennis Team at school. These two extra-curricular activities are my favourite. However, some activities are quite boring like the Cheering Team. I hate to be a dancer as my dancing is really horrible, so I felt a bit embarrassed when I had to dance in front of the audience on the Sports days.

My favourite teacher at secondary school is Mr Kwan. Right! It’s the Mr Kwan I told you earlier. He was one of the tutors at the English summer course I attended at Pui Ching. He’s really funny. Although he’s my favourite teacher, he does not teach me this year. I hope he will teach me in the future.

I met a new naughty classmate, Tom. He always plays tricks on others. Once, he wanted to play tricks on me, but I was very clever. When he came behind me, I turned my face around sharply and shouted into his ears loudly. He was stunned by my pre-emptive retaliation. Everyone laughed at him and he blushed immediately. How fun it was!

I know that you met many new friends, too. Did you have fun with them at school? How’s your summer holiday in Mainland China? Could you send me some of your holiday photos next time? I am looking forward to receiving your reply.

Cheers,
Chris
A Letter to an Old Classmate

Naomi Tsang 1A

Dear Jenny,

How are you? Long time no see! I’m really glad to receive your letter. You said that you’re not used to studying at a girls’ school before. How are you getting on now?

Your school is on Hong Kong Island, right? Is it much closer to your new home in Wan Chai? How long does it take for you to go to school? How’s your summer trip in Venice? You said it’s the most beautiful and romantic place you had ever seen. Can you send me some of your holiday photos in Venice? I really wanted to travel with you, but it’s so expensive. I could hardly afford the air tickets to Venice, let alone the hostel fees. If I can, I’ll save more money and travel with you in the future. Do you still remember Andy, the naughty boy who always bullied others in our primary school? I’m now in the same class with him. He had changed a lot! He has become so helpful and kind. Actually, when I first met him this year, I couldn’t believe my eyes. He’s totally different. He is a ‘brand-new’ Andy now! If you have time, please come back and visit us. I think you could hardly recognize him when you see him. He is much taller than before.

Please tell me more about your new classmates. You said you have met some new friends and one of them is called Joyce. How does she look? Is she as pretty as you? Do you find it strange not to have boys around in the school? Hope you will get used to that soon. Did you join any clubs and societies at school? I remember that you love painting very much. Perhaps you could join the Art Club of your school. Last time, I told that I have joined the school choir. Well, actually I am not really into singing, but my music teacher asked me to join it. I think it’s weird for a sporty boy like me to sing in a choir, standing among so many girls. Anyway, do you know that all F.1 students at my school have to go to a training camp at the very beginning of the school year? It was an exciting experience. We walked through the woods and hiked up the hills. Although the route was quite hard and a bit physically demanding, we all completed the trails. What’s more is we learnt more about the importance of partnership and cooperation. I love the team-building activities at the camp very much. How about you? Did you take part in any extra-curricular activities at your school?

Ah! I remember you said your favourite teacher is called Miss Tang. Do you know that my favourite teacher is also called Miss Tang, too? Miss Tang teaches me English. She has straight, long layered brown hair. I think she is quite beautiful and she speaks really good English. I enjoy her lessons so much. How about your Miss Tang? Is she pretty too? Which subject does she teach you?

You told me many things about your new school life. Let me tell you more about mine. Do you know that some new students from another primary school came to our middle school? There are five of them from my class. I would like to introduce one of them to you. His name is Fred. He is my new good friend. He sits next to me. He always tells jokes. During the lessons, he always repeats the funny sentences that the teachers say. He made us all laugh out loud. But I think it’s a naughty thing to do. How’re your studies? I heard that girls’ schools are more academically demanding than other schools. Is it true? Well, we have a packed teaching schedule and there are so many subjects in secondary school, not to mention the loads of homework waiting for me on my desk now. It’s totally different from primary school. We need to work harder.

Oh! I think I’ve written pretty much already. Hope you won’t lose patience. Remember to send me some photos of yours in Venice. I am looking forward to your reply. Please write soon! I miss you, my friend!

Yours,

Chris
No More Tricks on Father and Others!

Alvin Sum 1B

Last week, I went to school. My friend gave me some biscuits. They were called "Trick Biscuits". It was as hard as wood! But it looked like a real biscuit! I looked at it for a whole day but I did not know what it was made of. I wanted to trick someone.

That night, when my father came home, my mom was preparing my father’s dinner. After dinner, my father still wanted to eat. I gave him some snacks. It was the biscuit which was as hard as wood! My father did not like to eat hard food. When he bit the biscuit, his mouth bled! It was because his teeth were broken. My father punished me for three hours. He said he felt angry about that. He hated me very much... My father felt very angry that night.

After a day, I thought I was wrong. It was because the biscuit was very hard and I gave it to my father. That night, I said sorry to him. Luckily, my father forgave me. I felt happy about that.

These two days, I learned how to say sorry after I did something wrong. I also learned not to play tricks on any other person. It is not fun.

Super Lucy

Anna Choi 1B

Once upon a time, there was a woman named Lucy. She was a perfect and simple mother when nothing terrible happened. But when there were some villains nearby who did bad things, she was stopped being a simple woman again. She would become a superhero.

She would wear a long robe and wear a mask and she had a magic staff. The long robe could make her fly in the sky. Also, she was a brave and honest hero. She always defeated the villains. Therefore, everyone loved and respected her very much.

Lucy had an enemy called Dr Evil. He was a cunning and very evil villain. He always tried to make some robots to destroy the world. Everyone hated him very much.

One day, Dr Evil made a new robot to destroy the world. The terrible robot named Evil No. 10. It was made of metal so it could not be destroyed easily. One night, Evil No. 10 started to destroy the world. When it happened, Lucy was sleeping. But she still woke up and dressed quickly because she needed to save the world.

When she found Evil No. 10, it had already started to destroy the world already. Although destroying Evil No. 10 was not easy, Lucy did it. She just needed one minute to destroy Evil No. 10. Then she went home.

The next day, no one knew what had happened and Lucy did not tell anyone too.
All for My Own Good
Faria Tsui 1B

Last night, I was doing the computer homework. My dad said, “You are playing computer games again! You always play computer games. Why don’t you do your homework?” Dad banged at the door and went away. I felt very angry because I was doing homework on the computer. I wept hard.

My sisters came to comfort me. I said to them, “I will never forgive my dad!” I also decided to leave home.

When I left home, I felt sad. I met my mother. She said, “Oh! Why are you crying?” I told her what my dad said. My mother said, “Oh! Your father just wants you to study harder. He does not know you will be so angry at him.”

At that time, I knew that I was wrong. I went to a bookstore to buy a card for my father and apologized to him. “Sorry, father. I don’t know you just want me to study harder. I am sorry for saying horrible things. Can you forgive me?”

My dad said, “Of course I will forgive you, and I am sorry because I banged at the door hard!”

We smiled to each other happily at last.

The Magnetic Man
Torres Chue 1B

In 1995, Dr Rocky was named Europe’s Best Doctor.

In 1998, Dr Rocky disappeared suddenly. Some people said he was captured by some gangs. Everybody believed that he died.

But in 2005, he appeared in New York. And an unbelievable thing happened. He found that he had a magic power that he could control all magnets. He could also fly fast over magnetic things. Everyone called him “Magnetic Man”.

“Magnetic Man?” someone said. Dr Rocky, the Magnetic Man flew in the sky. At that time, many cars were going to crash! The Magnetic Man came and stopped the cars. He stopped the accident, too. But some police cars came. “Magnetic Man, you are under arrest!” the police shouted.

In a second, the Magnetic Man flew away as fast as a plane, no faster than a plane.

“Why did you let him go away?” the head of the gangs asked angrily. Parker, a member of the gangs said, “No, we didn’t, boss, I promise you! I will kill him,” The head said, “Okay. I’ll give you a chance.”

Parker was the killer who was cruel and cold-blooded. Rocky had a bad temper but he was clever. Parker found Magnetic Man and started his actions.

“Bump!” a woman fell down. She was shot! The Magnetic Man came fast and picked up the woman and took her to hospital.
Parker chased the Magnetic Man, and the Magnetic Man discovered it. Parker started to attack him. Magnetic Man did not fight with him because the woman was hurt seriously.

The Magnetic man succeeded in taking the woman to the hospital but Parker was still chasing him. They started to fight. Parker could control the fire. The Magnetic Man was hurt.

The Magnetic Man flew to the sea and dived into it. Parker could not use fire now! The Magnetic Man used the magnetic rubbish under the sea and defeated Parker. The Magnetic Man won the fight!

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Writing a Letter of Advice to Matilda

Sabrina Chan 1B

28th September 2012

Dear Matilda,

Thank you for your letter. I’m sorry to hear that you have some problems with your parents. However, don’t worry too much about that. Here is some advice and I hope it can help you.

In your letter, you mentioned that your parents don’t care about you. Nowadays, children have similar problems and therefore I understand your situation. In my opinion, you ought to chat more with your parents. If you do, they might understand more about your feelings. You also told me that you argued with your father. Why don’t you ask your father to tell you fairly? If you do, he may believe the truth. Moreover, I suggest you tell him that you don’t like to be called names and explain to him that he himself is also a liar and a cheat.

You said you like reading but your parents don’t allow you to do so. If I were you, I would read only in the library or in my own bedroom. I think you should tell your parents about the advantages of reading books, too. If that still doesn’t move them, I would advise you to plead with the librarian to persuade your parents to allow you to read. She would sympathise with you and would be willing to teach your father a lesson for tearing up a library book.
You are a clever girl and I must admit that your tricks are well planned. Nevertheless, they are still your parents, and although I understand it is hard to tolerate them, you should still respect them. Having said that, I don’t think you should tell them the truth because it will only make things worse. Don’t apologise. The best idea is to stop playing tricks, stay silent and act like nothing has happened at all. Try to act well and you would be less suspicious. If you really couldn’t help it, one trick per month is more than enough.

I sincerely hope that my advice is useful to you and please let me know how things turn out. I’m willing to do anything possible to help you.

Best regards,
Problem Pat

The Fatal Staff

Cynthia Ling 1C

A long time ago, there were three 12-year-old kids who went to the same school. They were Jason, Joey and David. Jason was a brave boy. Although he was not very smart, he always tried his best in everything. Joey was a very smart and knowledgeable girl as she was a book lover. David, who was very creative, was a guy who could always come up with new ideas to solve different problems. The three of them were good friends who always did things together both inside and outside school.

In the first week of their secondary school life, they were very excited because they had many new subjects and teachers. They also made new friends with their schoolmates. Things were going very well for them in the beginning of the new school year.

However, an announcement made by the school principal completely changed their feeling. “John Jackson, one of our students in this school, was attacked and is now seriously injured.” The principal told the whole school. Every student was shocked and stood in silence when they heard the news from the principal. The next day, the school made the official announcement that John had passed away.

Not only did Jason, Joey and David feel very sorry for John’s death, they also wanted to find out who killed him. After interrogating many students who knew John, they suspected that a student called Tim Wallace to be the murderer.
Tim was a weird student. He is a loner who always looked angry. Nobody ever wanted to talk to him. One strange thing about him was that he had disappeared from school the day after John’s death. Jason, Joey and David decided to look for him. They heard from one of their classmates that Tim would visit a toy store regularly at the weekend.

So on a Saturday, the three of them waited for Tim outside the toy store and followed him home. When Tim went to bed, they quietly broke into his house to look for evidence to prove that Tim was the murderer who killed John. In his house, they discovered a sharp staff. When Jason held it up and waved it in the air, some fire came out immediately. Tim was woken up and saw the three of them. He took out another staff from his closet and challenged Jason to fight him. “I killed John with this amazing staff and I’m going to do the same thing to the three of you! I will also kill everyone who never talked to me at school!” Tim shouted. Jason, who was the bravest of the three, stood still and tried to protect his two friends. Meanwhile, Joey and David managed to call the police quietly while hiding behind Jason. After a short time, the police arrived at Tim’s home and successfully arrested him.

He was later sent to the juvenile prison. The three good friends were praised by the principal for their daring effort and carried on with their new school life.

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The Adventure of a Bouncing Ball

Michelle Wong 1C

There was once a ball called Stitch. Stitch was a ball that was always bouncing but had no friends because the other toys around him thought that he was a silly and dull creature. The only thing that he could do was bouncing. “What a boring life you live!” said the sailing boat to Stitch. “Look at me! I go sailing in the river and the pond. Sometimes I will even to the seaside! It is very relaxing!” The other toys teased him. Stitch felt sorry for himself after hearing the other toys told him how great their life was. He thought that his life was miserable.

However, something happened one day and it changed Stitch’s life. One afternoon, Stitch’s owner Winnie brought him to the beach and played games with her friends there. When they left, they forgot to take Stitch with them. Being in a new place on his own, Stitch felt very lonely and frightened. Nobody was there. Then, a strong wave washed Stitch away. He floated and ended up very far away from the shore. After a while, a fish swam near him and said, “Hey round fellow! Do you want to do something fun with me?” Stitch said yes without even thinking and he joined the fish in the middle of the sea.

Stitch finally met his first and best friend. Although it was only a fish, Stitch enjoyed being with her and he decided not to return to the land again to live under Winnie’s ownership. He would rather start his new life in the sea with the fish happily and peacefully.
A Letter to Chris

Emily Ngo 1D

11th Sep 2012

Dear Chris:

How are you? I have heard about you from my classmate. Can we become friends? Let me introduce myself. My name is Ngo Hei Tung, Emily. I am 12 years old. I was born on 19th March, 2000. How old are you now? I live in Tsing Yi with my family. I like to listen to music because the rhythm is fantastic. I love to eat chocolate because it can make me happy and relaxed. What kind of food do you like to eat? My best friend is Anna. We always play together.

Then let me introduce my family. There are four family members in my family. They are my parents, my younger brother and I. My father is an interior designer. He has his own business. He always works overtime, even on his holiday. My mother is a nurse. She is kind. Although she is very busy, she always spares her time to talk with me and my brother. My brother is a primary four student. He loves making models, such as cars, building blocks etc. He is kind to me too! We usually go cycling, hiking or shopping on holidays. I want to know about your family too!

I study at PCMS in Hong Kong. It is a famous Secondary School in Hong Kong. My class is F.1D. I like my class because the classmates are friendly and the teachers are nice. I have many friends in my class. I also take part in an extra-curricular activity. It is skating. I have learnt freestyle skating for seven years. I enjoy this sport very much.

I want to know more about you, too! Please write soon. I enjoy getting your letters. Please send my best wishes to your family. I will write a letter to you soon!

Best wishes,
Emily
“Benny Brown – the Earth Hero”
Leo Ma 1D

In the 21st century, the scientists are extremely clever. They can make super weapons that can destroy entire continents. Dr. Bally is one of these people but unfortunately for us, he is also a terrorist.

In 2010, Dr. Bally invented a super-nuclear bomb, which could destroy all of Asia. He invented this in a laboratory in an African country – Zambia. He decided to take this super bomb to Hong Kong to detonate it.

Meanwhile, the U.K. government had sent a spy to Dr. Bally’s office in order to get some intelligence on what he was doing. On 28th February, the spy sent an intelligence report which said, “Dr. Bally will fly to Hong Kong. His flight number will be JH927. The super bomb will be in his luggage. He will arrive at his destination on 4th March. End of transmission.”

As soon as the U.K. government received this intelligence report, the government officials agreed to send their smartest and most able special agent, Benny Brown (spy number 003 and friend of James Bond), to Hong Kong to stop Dr. Bally from successfully completing his plan.

After Benny received the mission, he started to prepare his equipment. Firstly, he found his personal weapons’ specialist, Mr. Super, to equip him with state-of-the-art weapons and gear for his mission. Mr. Super prepared a BMW with a water cannon, automatic driving function, intelligence report receiver and a machine-gun. The machine-gun was cleverly positioned under the BMW logo on the bonnet of the car. He also prepared a bomb-defusing device for the mission.

On 3rd March, special agent Brown left London in his personal jet bound for Hong Kong. He took with him all his advanced weapons and equipment. He left London at 8:05 a.m. and arrived in Hong Kong at 4:45 p.m. He then left Hong Kong International Airport, driving his modified BMW across Tsing Ma Bridge on his way to Tsim Sha Tsui. While he was driving towards Tsim Sha Tsui he received an intelligence report. It said, “Dr. Bally left has left his hotel room and will detonate the bomb at 7:45 p.m. from the top of 2 IFC. End of transmission.”

Benny arrived at his hotel at 5:30 p.m. He then checked into his room. He showered and sat on the bed. He felt nervous but excited about his coming meeting with Dr. Bally.

At 7:15 Benny Brown arrived at 2 IFC. He then quickly took the elevator to the roof. He left the elevator and quickly looked around. He saw no one!

Suddenly, Dr. Bally arrived with the bomb. He said, “Asia will die and so shall we!” Benny Brown took out the bomb-defusing kit, but it was broken. There were only a few minutes remaining. Dr. Bally placed the bomb on the roof and prepared to detonate it.

Benny Brown leapt into action! He ran as fast as light across the rooftop to reach Dr. Bally. He then attacked him so aggressively that Dr. Bally dropped the bomb and ran away. However, the bomb had started to count down. Its detonation was only moments away! Benny Brown, agent 003, had to make a decision. Should he cut the red wire or the black one? His training kicked in. He decided to pull the red one and the timer on the bomb stopped.

Agent 003 had saved Asia. As a result, the United Nations gave him a medal for his bravery. To this day, he continues to fight evil wherever it is. But what ever happened to Dr. Bally? Will he return? It remains a mystery.
Writing a Letter of Advice to Matilda

Penina Chan 1D

28th September 2012

Dear Matilda,

I’m sorry to hear that you are unhappy with your parents. There are many children who have those problems so you are not the only one. I’ll give you some advice so don’t be upset.

In your letter, you said that your parents don’t care about you, they don’t like you and they don’t listen to you. I think you should talk to them. Then, they may see your point of view. Of course, you need to listen to them and try to see things from their point of view, too. When they don’t believe you or they misunderstand you, you have to explain things clearly to them or else the misunderstandings won’t disappear.

You also mentioned that your parents don’t like you reading books. Why don’t you encourage them to read comics or books that have been made into movies? They may have a lot of fun reading them and allow you to read books more often. Also, you can persuade your parents to watch less TV so you can have more free time for reading books.

You told me that you regret playing tricks on your parents. In my opinion, you have to tell your parents the truth and apologise to them. If you do this, then they will forgive you. I suggest you to do some exercise to relax as well. When you are exercising, you won’t be thinking of ways to punish your parents. If you really want to play tricks on them, then you should do it on April Fools’ Day so there is no reason for your parents to get angry with you.

I hope I have helped you with my advice. On a final note, I would like to remind you not to watch TV or read books for too long, as it will harm your eyesight. Please write and tell me how you get on.

Best wishes,
Problem Pat
The Secret Island
Andrew Yang 1E

Pollution problems have become very serious in most cities in the world. So one day, Peter thought that he should try to discover a place that hadn't been polluted yet. With this idea in mind, he started his adventure.

Before leaving his city for his trip, he opened the map and started looking for a distant place that he had not heard of before. He found some information about a special island. It was rumored that it was an island that people couldn't get out of once they had entered it. People called it the Secret Island.

Peter was a clever guy who was always full of curiosity. He always did research on things around him. He also loved to play with his dog, David. David was a lovely and strong dog. He was very loyal to Peter.

Peter decided to make a boat with some iron plates for the trip. He and David arrived at a city near the Secret Island by traveling a long way with his self-made boat. The island was a beautiful and quiet place with a lot of plants. There wasn’t any pollution. Suddenly, Peter heard someone talking. He immediately hid himself and he saw some humans walking in front of him. When David heard their voices, he barked at them loudly.

Those humans saw Peter and Peter told them that he was looking for the Secret Island. "Why are you here? I thought nobody can ever survive in this place. People outside this island probably think you have died already!" Peter told them. "We don't want to go back to our cities because we can't stand the pollution anymore and we enjoy living in this place as we can breathe fresh air freely all the time." They replied. Peter looked around carefully and realized that the Secret Island was indeed a very beautiful place that he had never been to before.

After staying on the island for a couple of days, Peter returned to his country and told the governor about the Secret Island. The truth about the island was finally revealed. The Secret Island is not so secret now as many people who want a healthy lifestyle are moving there.
Empowered by a Special Seashell

Natalie Cheng 1E

It was a relaxing and peaceful Saturday. My friend Chloe and I were at the beach sunbathing under the beautiful sky. At around noon, the sun began to shine very brightly and so I decided to go to a restaurant near the beach to get some cold drinks for us to refresh ourselves.

On my way to the restaurant, I accidentally stepped on a sharp object which I thought was a piece of broken glass. However, when I picked it up for a closer look, I found that it was a very special kind of seashell which I had never seen before. Just when I realized what I had stepped on, there was a sudden tingle coming from the bottom of my left foot. First I could only feel the pain in my foot. Moments later, the tingle caused by the seashell started to circulate throughout my entire body. The pain became very intense and in no time I lost balance and fell down onto the sand. I then completely lost consciousness.

The next thing I knew was that I had been admitted to a hospital. When I finally began to come out of my coma, I saw a television which was hanging in front of my bed. “If I can stay here and just watch TV every day, it would be fantastic!” I said to myself. To my surprise, the television was suddenly turned on while I was staring at it.

At first, I thought that it was one of the nurses who had switched on the TV for me. However, I looked around my room and there was no one to be found. “I must have unintentionally pressed on the TV’s remote control,” I thought. I looked around my bed and room again. Yet, I got the same answer – there were no nurses or remote controls. I slowly started to wonder if I had developed some kind of supernatural power from the accident on the beach which would allow me to control things around me with my mind power. I began to suspect that that special seashell
A Letter of Advice- Helping Matilda with Her Family

Problems

Stephanie Tam 1F

Dear Matilda,

I’m sorry to hear that you’re not very happy with your parents. I think I can give you some advice.

In the letter, you said that your parents don’t care about you. They don’t like you and they call you a cheat and a liar. I think you should talk with your parents and let them know you’re unhappy about this. You mustn’t argue with them. You know, this is a stupid choice. Try to be silent. Or you can inform your parents of their bad behaviour by writing them a letter or a message.

You told me that your parents don’t buy you books since they think they can gain knowledge by watching TV. Your father even tore out the pages of a book that you were reading. I think when your father tore out the pages of the book which you checked out from the library, you should tell him that he has to pay for that. About watching TV, I hope you can watch TV with them sometimes so that you can talk with them more. Or you can tell them gaining knowledge by reading is better than learning by watching TV as watching TV will hurt their eyes and maybe they have to wear glasses.

Finally, you mentioned that you had tricked your parents by putting glue in your father’s hat and tricked them into believing that the dining room was haunted. In this case, you should tell them the truth and tell them why you played tricks on them.

But the best way to keep you and your family relationship good is to, firstly, not to argue with them and try to be silent. Secondly, you should watch TV with them sometimes.

Come on, my friend! Be strong! You’ll get control of everything with time. I hope you’ll solve your problems soon!

Best wishes,

Stephanie
A Letter of Advice – Helping Matilda with Her Family

Problems
Jason Yu 1F

Dear Matilda,

How’re you? How’s everything? I’m sorry to hear your tragedy. I’m going to give you some advice and I hope you’ll solve the problems with my suggestions later on. I’m sympathetic to your sorrow.

First, in your letter, you mentioned that your parents are not interested in you and they always argue with you. And your dad doesn’t believe what you say. He even called you a cheat and a liar and never listens to you. I know that these things hurt you deeply. If I were you, I would let my parents know how bad I felt and I would advise them to change and treat me better. Perhaps you should talk with them and let them understand and care about you more.

Next, you said that your parents’ and your hobbies are totally different. In my opinion, it is usual for you to have different hobbies to your parents’. I wonder why you don’t accompany your parents to watch TV? You can suggest reading books with them for a while too and I think it can improve your relationship with them.

And then, I know that you’re angry about your parents’ bad behaviour and you’re not sure whether you should play tricks on them to take revenge. The best idea is to tell them the truth and apologize to them. Maybe they will realize how mature you are if you deal with the problems wisely.

At last, I hope my advice will help you soon. Please write and tell me how you get on. I wish I could help you solve your problems.

Best wishes,

Jason

The Day When I Became Superman

Jason Yu 1F

‘Don’t steal any more, or I will catch you at last!’ said a tall man with the letter ‘S’ on his clothes. ‘Who do you think you are? You can catch me?’ laughed the foxy thief. The man captured the thief easily, but then the tall man disappeared in a flash.

‘Ring, ring’ the sound woke me up all of a sudden. It was my alarm clock. When I got out of bed, there was a red and blue uniform beside me. The clothes were what I had seen before in my lovely dream. Also, it was the clothes which I had seen a hundred times on my belly. It was the clothes of Superman. ‘Oh!’ There was even a pair of shoes next to it too.

I felt surprised and I put it on immediately. It was awesome and handsome. I knew that it was powerful, so I tried to fly out from the window. ‘Fo, fo, fo’ some sound came from the remarkable clothes and I couldn’t believe myself.

I also knew that Superman should help the citizens to defeat the villains. In people’s hearts, Superman was a super hero who saved the world many times.

I wanted to save the world and help them too. Therefore, I flew around the world and admired the stunning Earth, but there were lots of evils in this world.

While I was thinking and looking around, I saw a man get a bag of money and walk secretly. I felt doubtful about it. He acted like a thief. So I flew as fast as a rocket and landed on the ground.

‘Does Superman really exist in the world?’ asked the thief in disbelief as I
grabbed his shoulder and tied him with a long rope. I discovered that there were many people nearby too. They clapped their hands and praised me. I felt extremely pleased with myself.

I flew away at last. This was a good experience of mine knowing that I could be Superman.

This powerful ability can help the world, but it can also destroy the world. I chose to be a hero who saved the world.

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**Letter of Advice – Communication is The Key!**

Agnes Wong 2A

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Dear Kelly,

Thanks for your letter. I feel sorry for you because of your problem at home and I hope that I can help you with my ideas.

You mentioned that you got a serious problem with your parents and had a lot of arguments. Why don’t you go for a meal and have a thorough discussion with them about the issues? If I were you, I would make it clear to them that it is important for you to have communication with your friends. Other than cultivating friendship and rapport, talking to them helps you to relax from stressful schoolwork and assignments. Your parents will understand how you feel.

Your parents think that you neglect your schoolwork by making unnecessary phone calls. The best thing for you to do is to let them know you are mature enough to have good time management. You have to show them that you will finish everything before talking to your friends and you put studying as your top priority! Your parents will eventually stand by you and support you!

Communication is the key and the only way to narrow the discrepancy between you and your parents!

Keep in touch and let me know how you get on, good luck!

Bye for now,

Annie
William Shakespeare once said that a man’s pride fell with his fortune. Being humble and modest is of utmost importance in all qualities and will help us with materializing our dreams.

Jeremy Lin, an ordinary young person, abruptly turns into a worldwide famous basketball player. Apart from his exquisite skills and adorable appearance, we should definitely learn from his perseverance and vigorous belief.

It is known that he graduated from an illustrious university. While he was experiencing extremely heavy school pressure, he was required to practice basketball every day. Due to God, he had the strength to exercise and study at the same time. In the beginning, he didn’t place a great deal of importance on his NBA career. Yet, his efforts have led him to be a successful player.

Behind his splendor, we cannot imagine how intensely he has trained and how much effort and time he has put into this great accomplishment. We can learn from his humbleness, as he never amplifies his glory. Moreover, he emphasizes that his belief has helped him to pass through many adverse circumstances and he always encourages teenagers to become Christians. His passion, his perseverance and his diligence have led to a renowned phenomenon, LINSANITY, describing his enthusiasm towards basketball. Everyone adores him and respects his attitude.

When we gain a splendid success, arrogance and confidence have the chance to consume everything and we are surrounded by vanity; sincerity and humbleness are not valuable anymore. In my opinion, Linsanity is a symbol of modesty and Jeremy is truly my idol as he is a devout and grateful Christian and never brags about his consummate skills.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.” A strong belief can protect and support us when we are weak and neglected.

Our destiny is on our own hands. Our strong determination may lead to a phenomenon which is even greater than Linsanity, who knows?
All About Me
Daisy Chan 2A

It is not in the stars to hold our destiny, but in ourselves. This is my favourite quote from William Shakespeare which has been leading me to materialize my dreams. My strong determination to hold my destiny through perseverance has contributed to all the hardships I have overcome while practicing violin, piano, ballet and the arduous training to become an elite athlete. This miscellaneous girl who lives with hope and passion is named Daisy.

My lovely family is also an important facet of my joyful life. My mother is a lawyer and my father is a doctor who inspired me to become an oncologist in order to help the poverty-stricken children in Myanmar. We all love chemistry and often discuss medical topics. Judy, my 16-year-old sister has been my best friend since I was born. She teaches me all the tips about fashion and the means of communication. Both of us support each other when going through tough times and share our joy when gaining success. I have a very humorous yet overweight brother, Alex. Like all boys, he is naughty, talkative and creative.

During the past thirteen years living in the tremendous world, I love every single minute of it as I obtain love and intense care from my family and friends. Living meaningfully and exploring novelty are my new targets. I will continue to hold my destiny and to live resplendently like the blossoming daisies.

Playing for God – Jeremy Lin
Charmaine Li 2B

‘We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.’ Romans 5:3-5 is Jeremy Lin’s favourite Bible verses. It also explains why he can deal with his tough moments in life.

Jeremy Lin was born in Los Angeles on 23 August 1988. His parents were born in Taiwan and they migrated to the United States in the 60s. From a young age, Lin often played basketball with his father and brothers. In high school, he won praises from coaches and was named Northern California Division II Player of the Year. He was obsessed with basketball and decided to be a professional player in the NBA.

At Harvard, Lin graduated with good grades. Although he excelled in basketball, he went undrafted in the 2010 NBA Draft. At first, he was disappointed and upset, but owing to the support from his family and the spiritual words of God, he did not give up. He practised harder and finally Golden State Warriors signed him. Though he became an NBA player, he was not as happy as he had expected. He did not have many opportunities to perform. He even cried when he was alone at night, as he had forgotten his initial purpose of playing basketball was to glorify God.

On 27 December 2011, New York Knicks signed him and it was the turning point of his career. In New York, God’s words once again reminded Lin that he should play the game ‘to get a crown that will last forever’. With the attitude of ‘using the best of me to fight for the Lord’, Lin made a seven-game winning streak record for the Knicks.
Moreover, in his first five NBA games as a starting lineup, his scoring reached 136 points which was an NBA new record. Suddenly, Jeremy Lin became a household name and Linsanity was born.

Jeremy Lin’s faith, as well as the love and support from his family, are the main factors of his success. He prays with his teammates before each game. He always feels happy when he plays the game as he knows that he plays for God and not for fame. He does not let the fame change him and therefore he always stays humble and praises his teammates. Even when there are negative comments because of his Asian-American heritage, he does not get angry due to his reliance on God’s command to love our enemies.

Furthermore, he has set up a Jeremy Lin Foundation, which is dedicated to reaching out to underprivileged individuals and communities to provide financial, educational and spiritual assistance, and to make a lasting difference in the lives of others.

From the story behind Linsanity, I have realized that Christian faith plays an important role in life, as God is able to change our destiny. God does not guarantee that we don’t have any struggles or pains. However, He brings us through them so that we can have a different wonderful life.

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**Pet Festival**

Daniel Choy 2C

Pet Festival is a public holiday in Hong Kong. It is a special day for everyone. It was started by Daniel Choy on 6th February 2012. He thought that pets and masters should have privilege on that day.

On that day, there is a 24 hour open day at the R.S.P.C.A. Also, masters can play stall games with their pets and will have free admission to all the restaurants. At Ocean Park and Disneyland, there are pet shows and movies for customers.

At Pet Festival, we usually eat some snacks in animal patterns, such as dog-shaped chocolate and, panda’s face biscuits, etc.

On that day, pet shops will offer free snacks to the pets and the masters can also buy pet clothes or pet necessities at half price.

At Pet Festival, pets and masters will wear the same style of clothes. Masters may wear a bangle with the pet’s name and birthday. A Beauty Pageant will also be held. All the pets will wear their beautiful clothes which are made by their masters. The winner can win a trip to the U.S.A with his/her pet for 20 days and can have free accommodation at the hotel.

For the people who do not have a pet, they may go to the R.S.P.C.A to adopt a pet or buy a pet, so they won’t be lonely during this festival and will have a great time with their pets.

I love this festival because I love pets and on that day we may have some happy memories with our pets.
A Profile of Khalil Fong

Holly Cheung 2C

Fong Dai Tong, Khalil is a Soul and R&B singer and songwriter who is 29 years old. He is very talented. Who is Khalil Fong? Read on!

Khalil was born in Hawaii on 14th July, 1983. His father, Les Fong is an American-born Chinese. Les Fong was a famous drummer. And his mother is from Hong Kong. Khalil was born in Hawaii and moved with his family to Shanghai when he was six years old. In order to let Khalil learn more about Chinese culture, his father decided to move to Guangzhou six years later and lived there for about two years. Afterwards, they moved to Hong Kong.

Khalil didn’t go to school like other children. To focus on music, he learnt all the things concerning music such as theory and instruments. He taught himself the guitar and the piano at the age of 15. And his father taught him to play the drums when he was small. He knows how to play bass guitar and percussion also.

Khalil’s first album named ‘Soulboy’ was released on 18th September, 2005. The two most representative songs were called ‘Love Love Love’ and ‘Finally’. They are about the stories between a few couples. Also, he is a songwriter. He wrote songs for many famous singers, e.g. Fiona Sit, Jacky Cheung and Eason Chan. His wonderful talent has brought him a lot of awards.

The reason why I admire and love him so much is because he has great passion for music. Soul, R&B and Blues are not so popular in Hong Kong. But he plays them well and lets Hong Kong people know more about these music styles.

Letter of advice – Telling Your Parents that Talking to Friends is Important!

Heidi Leung 2D

Dear Kelly,

How are you doing? I am glad to hear from you but I am sorry to read about your parents’ objection to letting you talk with your friends on the phone. I understand how you feel and I hope I have some good advice for you.

You asked me how you could persuade your parents you need your friends. First, you should not argue with your parents but try to explain to them calmly that your friends are important to you. Make it clear to them that you need a short break and talking with your friends during your rest does not distract you from studying. On the contrary, it’s relaxing and it takes your mind off your worries.

You also mentioned that you wanted to tell them they are at fault. I personally think it is not a good idea. If I were you, I would tell your parents that you’ve always respected them and depend on their advice, that your schoolwork is your priority and so they have nothing to worry about. Finally, you should let them know that your friends are of the same age as you are and you all have the same problems and worries to discuss.

To conclude, I’m sure it will all work out and they will show understanding. No worries!

I hope my advice helps. Good luck!

Bye for now.

Annie
The Story Behind Linsanity

Alex Tsang 2E

“Where there is a will, there is a way” can best describe the success of Jeremy Lin.

Jeremy Lin was born in Los Angeles on 23 August 1988. He grew up with his parents and two brothers. With God leading his way, Jeremy was blessed with opportunities in sports at a young age. He thought he could break people’s impression of Asian men, and therefore, he made up his mind and strove for his goal to make it in the NBA.

Jeremy became a famous local player and won a number of awards in his high school years. However, his dream college, Stanford did not offer him a sports scholarship. Meanwhile, Harvard guaranteed him a spot on its team. Although he led Harvard to many wins in the NCAA, he went undrafted in the 2010 NBA Draft. However, he received the support of his family and guidance from the church pastors. With a renewed spirit, he worked harder to prepare for trying to enter the NBA. Due to his outstanding performance in his training, he received a contract from Golden State Warriors. However, as a rookie, he did not really get a chance to play and he was extremely depressed and disappointed. At the end of the season, he was waived. In November, Houston Rockets signed him but released him in a week. Finally, the New York Knicks claimed him. Even though his basketball career was not that smooth, he realized he shouldn’t make basketball as his idol, but instead, God as his pursuit of life.

The Knicks had considered releasing Jeremy before the well-known seven straight wins. As there were many injuries in the team, Jeremy was given a chance to play in early February. Opportunity dances with those who are ready on the dance floor; Jeremy led the Knicks to a win. He then led the team to make a seven-game winning streak and he broke a number of NBA records. After the victories, Jeremy was named the Player of the Week and he made the cover of Time and other sports magazines, and after that, Linsanity was born. Even though with all the fame and glory shining on him, he humbly gave all the credits to his team and the glory to God. At the time when he was left unused, he was not disappointed but walked with God. Moreover, he never thinks negatively but believes in himself. I think these are the reasons behind his success.

Jeremy Lin had an Asian Tour in the summer of 2012. He visited Taiwan, China and Hong Kong and taught children basketball. He has established the Jeremy Lin Foundation to help the underprivileged people and communities. He said that he wouldn’t be an NBA player for long. He wanted to be a pastor in a church in the future.

The story of Linsanity, which shows how hard work, personalities and firm belief of God can lead to a successful life, is a good life lesson that we can learn from.
Carrot Festival
George Yip 2E

Carrot Festival is a special holiday in Hong Kong. It is a special day started by George Yip for everyone to remember how the farmers have worked for us. It takes place on 15th May every year. On that day, all adults should not eat any meat to pay homage to this special occasion. It is also good for their own health as nowadays adults always have problems with eating too much and exercising too little.

On that day, all canteens and restaurants (except for those in primary and secondary schools as students are growing up at this period) should only provide food made of mainly, carrots like carrot cake or carrot soup and other vegetables. Also, all toy shops will only display and sell carrot-figured toys to meet the needs of the festival. In parks, children can join the carrot drawing and cooking competitions which children use mashed carrots or carrot juice as a replacement for paint. Also, on this particular day, parents may bring their own children to fields and try to work and live like real farmers. They can experience the feeling of being one of them and to train them to be tough as well as letting them pay respect to the people who work so hard to grow rice and veggies that the children eat with such comfort. This will give them a deep and true memory of how much the farmers have sweated for them. Also, at the Carrot Festival, cake shops give out carrot cakes for free too! What a delight!

The loveliest event in the festival is that, people run madly on the streets and pour mashed carrots on others for fun and the people who get covered in the carrot should not be angry. It is just like the Tomato Festival in Spain! Moreover, that evening, there is a giant carrot-float parade. Thousands of carrots are stuck in different shapes together. People can even pull the carrots away from the floats too!

What a day of joy!!

A Profile of Stephen William Hawking
Clarice Lee 2F

Have you ever heard of Stephen William Hawking? Of course you have! But except for his great scientific works and medical condition, what else do you know about this famous person? Keep reading to find out!

Hawking was born on 8th January 1942 in Oxford. His father was Frank Hawking and his mother was Isobel Hawking. Stephen Hawking studied in University College, Oxford, Cambridge University and Perimeter Institute. Although he’s not an outstanding student in high school, by the time he graduated he had developed a great attitude towards learning things. His physics tutor Robert said that it’s only necessary for him to know that something could be done, and he could do it without looking to see how other people did it... His mind was different to those of his contemporaries.

In 1996, Hawking graduated with his doctorate from Cambridge University. Also, he was awarded the Adams Prize with his colleague, Penrose, for an essay.

Hawking has been successful with his scientific works and has discovered many things about the universe. He has also been awarded many awards and honors. Unluckily, during his early stage of his graduate work, he was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, which progressed during the years. At the time he lost his balance and fell down a flight of stairs when the symptoms of the disorder first appeared. He did not see much point in obtaining a doctorate, since he expected to die soon afterwards. However, he has survived more than 10 years, which is uncommon.
In 2012, he is almost completely paralyzed. He communicates through a speech-generating device, and he is able to operate a computer keyboard with small movements of his body. Although he has this terrible disorder, he has described himself as lucky, as the slow progression of the disease has given him more time to make discoveries and has not hindered him from having, in his words, “a very attractive family”.

The reason I like him so much, is not only because he has made a lot of discoveries, but also because he just lets his mind flow without his medical condition hindering it. He continues to make discoveries even though he’s disadvantaged. Furthermore, his studious attitude toward learning in his younger days has impressed me a lot.

Stephen Hawking has a great life, which everyone had heard about. He has a disobedient body but a good mind. Despite the difficulties he faces, he has made many discoveries. His life tells us that even if we were sick, or disadvantaged, we could make our dreams come true just like anyone else. Don’t you agree?

A Letter to Lucy – Recovery from a Nightmare
Jillian Kwan 2F

Dear Lucy,

How have you been? I heard that your mum was unfortunately killed in a tragic accident. I’m sure that the bus collision was a nightmare for your family.

Pal, I know you must be much sadder than I am. May your mum rest in peace. When I watched the news on television, I was terribly shocked too. Although I don’t know what I can do to help you, at least, I believe I can write a letter to you to show you and your dad some support. I really hope that my condolence goes to your family.

Lucy, you are sad, but you can’t be depressed. Remember, you are never alone. Be gracious that at least your father is still alive and is still with you. Also, I’m always on your side to support you. At this moment, your father also needs support. Try to talk to him more and I’m sure both of you can share each other’s sorrow. As for you, when you’re sad, try screaming loudly. It helps relieve your unhappy feeling. If you want to find someone to talk to, call me at anytime. At weekends, we can go to the countryside to refresh ourselves. If you can’t sleep at night, I can lend you some CDs to listen to. They are of soft music and you’ll feel at peace. I am sure they can help you.

Be strong Lucy. I’ll always be there if you need me. Do drop me a line for whatever you want to share with me. Take care.

Love,
Jillian
An Amazing Adventure about Tom and Jerry

Roxanna Lau 2F

In the last summer holiday, two little boys, Tom and Jerry, always spent time together playing. One day, they were free and they wanted to do something exciting. While they were walking, they came across an orchard and they decided to play there.

‘Look, Jerry! There are lots of big apples! Let’s have some apples for lunch!’ shouted Tom happily.

But Jerry said that they might be caught and punished, as it was not right to pluck those apples without any permission from the orchard owner. However, Tom ignored Jerry and laughed at him. Jerry was angry, as he hated to be looked down on by his good friend, so he agreed to climb the tree. To show his ability, Jerry even offered to climb first.

‘Here I go!’ Jerry shouted loudly and climbed up the big apple tree adroitly, but Tom wasn’t that lucky and he fell down 5 times! Seeing this, Jerry encouraged him and Tom finally reached the middle branches of the big apple tree. They were joyful and they almost forgot that they came to the orchard ‘illegally’.

The boys straddled on the branch and tried to get some apples for lunch. While they were eating happily, the orchard owner’s dog, Jelly, smelled the odour of the apples and he was trying to track the source of the scent.

‘Where are you? Little boys, show me quickly!’ Actually, Jelly was a wizard and he had been turned into a dog because of some harmful magic. He wanted to become a human again, but he needed to help at least twenty children. He was looking for the two children to help.

‘Oh, that’s great! I finally find you guys!’ Jelly said.

‘Boy! I’m here to help you! Hey!’ But he didn’t realise that he could no longer speak human languages. All the words he had said were barking sound, bow-wow. His owner, on the other hand, heard the barking sound from Jelly and went to see what was happening.

‘Jelly, Jelly, where are you? Oh! You’re here! Who are you?’ The orchard owner was furious to see that two strangers were sitting on his tree. He took them from the tree and Jelly just stood there, saying nothing.

‘Oh! Greedy boys! How dare you come and steal my big apples.’ shouted the orchard owner. He took out his wooden stick and hit Tom and Jerry fiercely. Tom wailed and he was beaten and bruised.

‘Help us! Please! Stop it! It’s painful!’ Tom and Jerry screamed. From their voice, one could tell that the beating was going to claim their lives.

Suddenly, the harmful magic on Jelly expired and he could speak in human language again. He shouted, ‘Stop it! Stupid farmer!’

Everyone was shocked. There was a minute of silence.

‘Tom and Jerry! Can you promise me not to steal apples in the future? Also, when you go to somebody’s private place, you should first seek his or her permission. If you do it again, you will become a dog like me! Promise?’ asked Jelly.

‘Of course, we’ll promise! I can no longer stand the painful beating,’ said both of them.

‘As for you, orchard owner, can you forgive them and let them go? They’re only kids.’ Jelly asked.
‘Okay,’ replied the orchard owner in a shaky voice. He was still wondering how a dog could speak.

Suddenly, Jelly became a man again. He was so happy that the magic on him finally vanished.

‘I can’t believe it,’ said the orchard owner. ‘Okay boys, if you want to play in the orchard again, you may. But don’t touch my fruit!’

The boys promised and Jelly left them. After that, the boys came and played in the orchard all the time. Sometimes, they even offered to help the owner with the farming work. They were happy, as they became good friends. But Jelly was the happiest as he could finally become himself again.

An Unforgettable and Unhappy Tree-Climbing Day

William Mak 2F

It was a sunny day last Wednesday. At the same time, it was also Tom’s school holiday. As Tom had completed all his holiday assignments, he decided to hang out with Sam, his newly-made friend in secondary school. Tom was so excited that he couldn’t wait for one more minute to call Sam. He asked if Sam would like to go out with him or not. Luckily, Sam was doing nothing in his spare time that day, so he agreed to go out with Tom. As they didn’t want to take a long trip, they finally decided to go for a walk near their homes.

While they were walking and chatting happily, they spotted an orchard. Inside the orchard, there were a lot of fruit trees and the two boys were attracted by one of the apple trees that was full of big red apples.

‘They must be very juicy,’ said Tom.

‘You’re absolutely right, Tom. Look how red they are!’ Sam agreed.

‘Sam, have you ever climbed a tree?’ asked Tom.

Sam shook his head and asked, ‘Shall we?’

Out of curiosity and hoping to get some excitement, they climbed the tree. To their surprise, they were very glad to have done that because the view from the top of the tree was so spectacular. They couldn’t believe that their first-tree-climbing experience could be so memorable.
However, they were newcomers after all. While they were chatting on the tree, they were discovered by the farm owner’s dog. It barked at them loudly. The two little boys were so afraid for fear that the dog would catch the attention of other people, so they plucked the apples and threw them at the dog. It then barked even louder.

Hearing the commotion, the farm owner’s attention was eventually caught. He arrived at the apple tree quickly and was shocked to see the ignorant boys were throwing his precious apples! He was very angry and he shouted at the boys.

‘You naughty boys! Come down or I’ll beat you to death,’ the farm owner threatened.

Tom went down and was punished by the farm owner. Sam, on the other hand, was so afraid and he hid himself in the tree.

At last, the farm owner used a stick to beat Tom. Tom was very regretful about having climbed the tree. After the punishment, the farm owner left him alone and it seemed that he had almost forgotten that the other boy, Sam, was still on the tree.

Sam went down it the end. Tom was very angry with such a coward.

‘I didn’t expect you to hide yourself and not offer me any help!’ said Tom.

‘I’m sorry!’ replied Sam.

‘I would have to say I’m sorry too. You and I are no longer friends. Bye.’ Tom replied angrily and left in no time.

To Sam, the day was unforgettable and unhappy. Not only because he climbed a tree, but also because he lost a friend.

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The most impressive moment in the 2012 Summer Olympics
Daniel Wan 3A

After watching the 2012 London Olympics, I can see what true sportsmanship is. I can feel the resolutions of each athlete, and the most unforgettable scene I witnessed in the Games was the male individual 400m event.

During the competition, you might have discovered that there was one athlete who was different from the others; he was Oscar Pistorius, the first double amputee to participate at the Olympic Games. At that time, I was wondering how could an amputee run as fast as a normal guy?

But as soon as the event began, everything changed. Although Oscar started slower than the other runners, he still chased after them and overtook them. Finally, he finished in second place and the result qualified him for the semifinal.

I saw Oscar’s determination in trying to win the event and he showed us that even though he was a disadvantaged athlete, he could be as competitive as normal runners. I think Oscar must have paid a lot more effort than other runners in order to become a victorious runner. Even though he did not place in the semifinal, he still behaved optimistically, and said. “My aim was to make the semifinal. It’s a dream come true.”

After watching Oscar’s performance in the individual 400m event, I noticed that even if you have natural talent in doing something, but are not well-trained, you may still not be successful.
1989 Student Movement
Grace Yim 3A

The Hong Kong Government recently tried to implement a new moral and national education curriculum in Hong Kong primary and secondary schools. I think the Hong Kong Government should include the 1989 Students Movement in this curriculum. This is because the proposed curriculum is to allow students to learn about the history and the real picture surrounding important events in China. Also, the 1989 Student Movement is a bit unfamiliar to most of the students in primary and secondary schools nowadays; therefore, I think this event should be included in the curriculum.

In my opinion, the 1989 Student Movement is a tragedy. It started with the death of Hu Yao Bang, and students from many cities in China gathered in front of Tiananmen Square to mourn him. Sadly, at the end many people, including soldiers, students and workers, died. This event made people change the point of view towards the Chinese Government.

Although, I think the solution to stop the students gathering in the square by the China Government wasn’t wise or humane, I understand that the students were too radical. Nevertheless, the Students Movement was confirmed as an expression of patriotism, progress and peace but some riots happened in many cities of China. The government tried to discuss the situation with the protesters but failed. They had no other choice but to use military force to stop the movement.

Even though people claim that National Education will brainwashing students because it will just inculcate lots of materials designed to build a sense of patriotism, nationalism and belonging for the motherland. I consider that we should not think things unidirectionally, but should not forget this event, and to learn the lessons from it. We look forward to China becoming a strong country and enjoying our sense of superiority.

The Kidnapped Crocodile
Lynn Yung 3A

The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw. He gasped at the ghastly sight.

“Oh! What’s happened?” screamed Sammy.

His room was totally messy and everywhere was wet. Also, he found that the bathroom door was open. He had locked the bathroom door in case the baby crocodile came out. Now that the door was open, the crocodile had escaped. It had escaped! It had climbed out the window and scampered away.

“It’s unbelievable!” moaned Sammy.

Then he sprang up and rushed to the street. He looked for the baby crocodile all over the place. Unfortunately, he couldn’t see the crocodile. So he asked some neighbours.

“I saw three people wearing black clothes,” said Mary the neighbour, “who were holding a long big thing that was wrapped in a piece of black cloth.”

“Could you see the thing they had wrapped up?” asked Sammy.

“I could only see a tail covered in scales,” shrieked Mary, “is it the baby crocodile?”
His baby crocodile had been kidnapped! He started to think about what he needed to do when suddenly, he saw a card on the floor. He picked it up and read it.

“Your baby crocodile is in my hands. If you want to see it again, you cannot call the police, just follow the arrowhead. The Kidnapper.”

Sammy followed the arrowhead. The destination was a pool. His baby crocodile was swimming in the pool! He was so glad and breathed a sigh of relief. He saw the three people standing beside the pool. These three people physiques were like his parents and his cousins. He was in great doubts. He tiptoed quietly toward them.

“What are you doing?” asked Sammy.

They were startled and turned around. He was shocked a bit and then declared, “You are the kidnappers!”

He asked madly, “Why did you take it to the pool?”

“It was upset,” said mum, “so we took it to the pool to go swimming.”

Sammy now understood. The crocodile couldn’t stay long in the bathroom. Suddenly, all those who live in Tong Kong Estate came and said, “As long as the baby crocodile is happy, it can live here forever and we will visit it as much as possible.”

Since then, Tong Kong Estate was never the same again.

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National Education
Matthew Lo 3A

“I would never regret. I only hope for a fair evolution about the June Fourth Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 from the Chinese Government, especially for the ones who dedicated their life,” said one of the participants.

The Hong Kong Government plans to create a new moral and national education curriculum in Hong Kong primary and secondary schools. However, it is still at issue and many fear that it will lead to “brainwashing”. In light of this, the government should introduce not only the economic development, but also the people’s livelihood predicament and democracy’s plight. In my opinion, the June Fourth Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 is the best choice for it. Here are my reasons below:

First of all, the June Fourth Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 is the most globally well-known, yet tragic, event of China’s democratic development. Over ten million people around the world joined the protest, including Hong Kong. Also, the June Fourth Incident memorial events are still the main annual event for the democracy movement in Hong Kong. Unlike the 1911 Revolution, the June Fourth Incident has not been mentioned in great detail in the Chinese history curriculum.

Secondly, the June Forth Tiananmen Massacre of 1989 is one of the most important events of the “New China” that has affected a lot of people. After the incident, the government started to control people’s words. “A little fire can burn the whole forest.” — as the Chinese saying goes. The Communist Party of China is striving as much as possible to extinguish every flame before they grow larger and the problems exacerbates. The method of making people think no more of democracy is money — the government put lots of resources on progressing the economy. Moreover, it is noteworthy that corruption is still very serious in China, as it was in 1989. Some observers claim that it is even worse today.
Lastly, this miserable event can always remind the leaders that a city or a country should listen to its people. President Sun Yat-Sin’s doctrines “Three Principles of the People” and “Anti-bureaucratic profiteering” are all good for the country, but the government didn’t listen. Therefore, by learning from this information, students can learn to be better leaders.

1989 Students Movement
Moon 3A

Most of Hong Kong people do not have a sense of superiority towards China. That’s why many Hong Kong citizens oppose the implementation of the moral national education curriculum in primary and secondary schools. People think that it is brainwashing and they don’t want their children to be influenced. However, we are Chinese and we should have a sense of belonging towards Chinese culture.

In my opinion, I think the 1989 Students Movement must be taught in this curriculum. This is one of the worst things that China has ever done. At that time, Hu Yao Bang had died of illness and the university students in Beijing had gone to Tiananmen Square to mourn for him. Because the number of people increased, this movement was seen as a form of protest by the government. People from all over China supported this movement and its scale increased rapidly. At last, the government decided to silence the demonstrators by force. Many university students were killed. This was really a tragedy. This act worsened China’s already tarnished international image.

And the point is, the Chinese government denied it and stated that it was only the images from the square. Because of the pressure from public opinion, the government recognized the movement. Then they arrested the people who were protesting and blocked the passage of messages coming out of the square.

Although we should be patriotic about China, I think that we should know about the dark side of our country too, not only learn about what great things China has done. That’s why I chose the 1989 Student Movement. The Chinese government is
wrong in its conduct surrounding this event. They always say that Japan should let their people know about the Massacre in Nanjing but they are the same as the Japanese militarists actually. They didn’t have the courage to recognize what they have done. This is the reason why China is still steeped in corruption.

A citizen should be able to learn about what his or her country has done. This is the only way to enhance the soft power of China and help our economic development.

The most impressive moment of the 2012 Summer Olympics

Nip Yan Ting 3A

The most unforgettable scene I witnessed of the 2012 London Olympics is the synchronized swimming event. Athletes from different countries followed the wonderful music, made beautiful by the choreographed actions that complimented the theme of the event. It was truly amazing.

Synchronized swimming is a challenging and exhausting sport. It is because the athletes can hardly hold a breath for a long time. Also, all the athletes or teammates need to be co-operative and demonstrate sportsmanship.

China girls’ synchronized swimming team wore swimsuits with pretty butterfly patterns on them. All the teammates were well-trained and they are good competitive rivals.

During the competition, they exhibited fabulous technique. At last, they won the silver medal. This was their best result and it was glorious. After that, they showed their victorious placement when they accepted the prize. For them, it was a brilliant moment.

After watching the 2012 London Olympics synchronized swimming event, I understand that team-spirit and co-operation are very important to a team. Anyone of us should not be proud and selfish but self-effacing. I will work harder, try my best and be more hardworking in the future! Also, I will be serious while I am doing revision and doing homework.
1989 Students Movement
Stephanie Chan 3A

Being a Chinese, we should have the sense of belonging. However, even though we should be patriotic, we must identify what the truths are. The Chinese government chose to cover the truth of the 1989 Students Movement. Why do we need to know about it? What does it imply?

On April 18, 1989 thousands of Beijing students gathered in Tiananmen Square to mourn the death of Hu Yaobang. They were against the government! Then the students turned their demonstration of dissatisfaction towards the Communist government. The students argued that the Communist Party was not focusing enough on political and economic reforms. The students demanded democracy while carrying slogans. The Communist Party became increasingly distressed as the students declared they would not attend their university classes.

On June 4, the army cracked down on the students at Tiananmen Square. As the troops arrived, they fired AK47s into the crowds as well as viciously beating the students. Some students were beaten by choice! By 5 am, Tiananmen Square had been emptied leaving thousands dead and the country was in shambles.

After the 1989 Student Movement, the government announced that it was only a movie! In fact, some soldiers said that they faced the dilemma of beating people or not. Beating people was a painful choice, but it was not an option to solve the problem. The government tried to cover the truth, but we should know it. It is because we should recognize and understand more about China. Not only the good aspects that we are proud of, but also the other side which is dark.

China’s international status is growing and the economic developments are surging. The Chinese have the sense of superiority and nationalism with great passion. The government should face the reality and unveil the truth.

Wonderful Experience
Stephanie Chan 3A

The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw. The window was opened and the crocodile was climbing out of the window. It escaped! The bathroom door was unlocked. Everything was wet and messy.

The bath tub was full of water. The pillow was torn and the feathers were all on the bed. The cabinet which was near the bed was open. The lamp was smashed on the floor. A shoe and a pair of jeans were on the floor too. Sammy was shocked. His hands were shaking. Sammy screamed, “Oh no! What should I do now? Should I tell mum? Oh, she will kill me. Maybe I can catch up with it and bring it back.”

He left the house and followed the crocodile’s clawprints quietly. He didn’t want to let anyone notice it. The crocodile was dark green in color and about 3 metres long. It was easy to see it because there was nothing to hide it from view. Sammy tiptoed like a mouse after it.

The baby crocodile crept down some stairs and went into a dark room. The crocodile then pressed a button. The light turned on suddenly. Oh no! There were more than five crocodiles! Sammy felt dizzy and almost fell down. He flustered, “Will I be eaten by them? Oh, I am in danger. Help!” The crocodiles looked evil with spiky teeth. They were all voracious. The room stunk.
Suddenly, the baby crocodile shouted. “Hey! Don’t target him.” The crocodiles were all disappointed. They stared at me pitifully. My baby crocodile glared at them severely. They said, “In fact, we were adopted by the baby crocodile. He gives us food to eat and water to drink. We live happily here. No one notices that we live here!”

One of them said, “I remember that I was born on an island. Life was hard there. The sea was polluted and almost no fish could live there. It was hard to catch fish and I had nothing to eat all the time. One day, a chance came! A ferry came here and I crept on the ferry. Then I arrived here.”

Sammy was surprised at this wonderful experience. A crocodile had lived in the zoo and escaped. One of them had lived here for eight years. Sammy said, “Wow, I love listening to the stories that you’ve told me. Let us be friends. I must visit you every day. “At last, Sammy went back home and did the cleaning. After he had finished cleaning, he slept.

In the dream, he discovered that he was playing with the crocodile at the beach in the coming days. This was the most wonderful dream he had ever had. Because of these hidden hermits, Tong Kong Estate was never the same again.

What I’ve Learnt From The Indefatigable Hero
Vincent Leung 3A

The 2012 London Olympics was glorious, fabulous and brilliant. In this worldwide event, the most unforgettable moment was the Men’s 110m Hurdle race, which Liu Xiang was in, as this event was so competitive.

At the beginning of the race, Liu Xiang looked confident and was full of determination to win the race. Other well-trained athletes and he were preparing for the run and were putting on their own number tickets on the vests. When the starter told them to get on the tracks, the starter started the race by firing the starting pistol and all the athletes ran extremely rapidly as they were fighting for their glory.

At that moment, a tragedy happened. When Liu Xiang jumped over the first hurdle, he suddenly fell down and lay on the track not attempting to continue the race. He was really exhausted, upset and in great pain by holding his ankle tightly. Some first-aid workers took him off the track.

Eventually, he returned to the sports ground and he jumped to the last hurdle with a single leg and kissed it. The scene was very touching and unforgettable. This strongly showed his sportsmanship even though he could not finish his race normally, he still wanted to complete it. Moreover, he congratulated those victorious athletes by shaking hands with them. Two athletes were very cooperative and held him to walk around the sports ground.

If I were Liu Xiang at that moment, I would totally collapse at once when I fell down. This was because I would be representing my country and facing a lot of pressure as
all people had set their focus on me. I would have felt very guilty because I could not fulfill their great expectation.

After I watched this scene, I discovered that life is full of challenges, failures and setbacks. I appreciate Liu Xiang very much as he is brave enough to encounter the adversities. We should learn how to face them in a positive way, where there seems to be no way. If we fail, we should not be frustrated. We have to learn from Liu Xiang. He fell down but he could stand up again and insisted on jumping over the last hurdle to finish.

Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989

Vincent Leung 3A

The Hong Kong Government plans to create a new moral and national education curriculum in Hong Kong primary and secondary schools. In my opinion, 1989 Students Movement should be included in this curriculum. The reason is that the Tiananmen Square Protests of 1989 is one of the greatest disasters after the 1911 Revolution. It shows the patriotism of Chinese. However, not many people in China actually know the facts about what exactly happened during the protest. It is so interesting that the Chinese Government wants to brainwash every one of its citizens by any means possible. Here are some of the facts.

At that time, the leaders of Chinese Government had changed the style of economics from Maoist Style to collectivist economics to build up the economic development. Because of this change, the grievances were over inflation and high unemployment rate. Moreover, the corruption of the party elite was growing rapidly. After the death of deposed Communist Party General Secretary, Hu Yaobang, many gatherings and protests were held in or around Tiananmen Square. The protesters were mainly students, who were full of passion, and called for government accountability, freedom of the press and speech and the restoration of workers' control over industry. The peaceful protest lasted for seven weeks.

Last but not least, the government had tried to negotiate with the leaders of the protesters several times but it didn’t succeed. The government had changed its attitude and became harder. Finally, the leaders of the Chinese Government chose to use a violent way to end the movement and a lot of innocent protesters were killed. Nevertheless, the Chinese Government insisted that no one had been killed in the operation.
In conclusion, as far as I am concerned, the 1989 students movement must be added to the moral and nation education curriculum, which helps to enhance the sense of belonging and sense of superiority of China. Although, it can’t show how great our country is, it helps to show the dark side of our country. Therefore, kids and teenagers can learn from it and avoid it happening again. Furthermore, it will enhance the soft power of China and raise the international status of China.

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A Letter of Advice – How to Keep a Good Daily Routine

Marcus Fung 3B

Dear Mable,

I’m sympathetic of you. I’m sorry to hear that you’ve got lots of problems. But never mind, cheer up, my friend! Here is some advice for you.

You’ve mentioned that you’re not getting up on time. I suggest you build up a good daily routine by making a timetable. Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise!

As for your worry about dozing off and lagging behind in class, the best remedy is to go to bed earlier. It is the most important thing for you to do. Also, if you want your exam results to be better, you have to ask for help when you have things that you don’t understand. Do more supplementary exercises because practice makes perfect. Don’t be afraid of making mistakes, as mistakes are proofs that you’re trying.

As you’ve told me that your health is getting worse, I’m really worried about it. In order to keep yourself healthy, you should think positive. I know that your state of mind isn’t very good during this period of time, but you have to face it. So I recommend you to take more rest. Don’t let yourself be angry or annoyed since it attracts negativity. Do more exercise! It’s great action for you to do. You can enjoy playing sports. It makes you happy. Although these actions may not always bring happiness, there’s no happiness without action. Let’s do it together!
I know that you’re upset and helpless now, but cheer up! Head up and heart open to better days! I hope all my advice can help. Remember, learn from yesterday, live for today and hope for tomorrow. Don’t worry too much about your future. I’m sure you’ll have a better life soon.

Write back soon! I’m hopeful to hear your happy news soon!

Best wishes,
Chris

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**A Haunted Hall with a Dinosaur**

Marcus Lam 3B

‘Stomp! Stomp! Stomp!’

‘Argh’, Tim shouted, ‘We’re so dead!’

‘Keep quiet, idiot! It’ll hear us’, Jason whispered. ‘How can a ‘dead’ dinosaur become alive?’ I was puzzled and frightened.


What happened? It happened a few hours ago.

It started with the school trip. The teachers and the guide talked and talked. Meanwhile, the infamous bad boys Tim and Jason came up with a cunning idea. ‘Mmm... What should we do now?’ Tim giggled. ‘Playing tricks on the security guard sounds fun’ the mastermind Jason replied. ‘Sound like a plan! Let’s do it, my friend,’ Tim said.

The nasty boys did a clandestine break-in to the control room. The guard, Jimmy was sleeping as sweetly as a child, but unfortunately, Tim slipped and fell onto the ground. ‘Ouch!’ the scream woke Jimmy up.

‘What are you boys doin’ here?’ Jimmy asked with anger. Tim and Jason began to escape.
They ran and rushed with no direction in mind. They hid in an exhibition hall, which was closed permanently and all unauthorized access was forbidden.

‘It’s so dim here! And it’s stinky...’ grumbled Tim. ‘The guard has walked past already. Let’s go.’ Suddenly, a dinosaur exhibit moved slowly. It became ‘alive’!

That’s what happened, and so, it chased them and Tim and Jason hid.

With Jason’s command, they both ran for their lives. The bad boys finally escaped from the room. Jimmy walked past by coincidence. ‘Gotcha!’ Jimmy yelled. ‘Jimmy! Run! There was a dinosaur. It wanted to eat us!’ Tim and Jason screamed together, ‘Did you boys run into that room?’ ‘Yes,’ they replied. ‘Do you know that room has been haunted for one hundred years. Since a kid died there because of a heart attack, strange things have happened. As a result, management has decided to shut it down. You boys have been missing for six months. Are you two alright?’

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**Tips for dealing with Insomnia**

Rainbow Cheng 3B

Dear Edith,

I’ve read your letter and have learnt that you have been seriously suffering from insomnia recently. I understand how uncomfortable and stressful you feel as I have had the same problem too before. Don’t worry! You’ll be fine soon. I hope the following advice may help you.

In order to deal with the problem, you must know the causes first. The reason I had insomnia was that I’d been too nervous about my study. When I had my first Physics lessons, I was extremely worried because I couldn’t understand what the teacher was talking about. I just couldn’t stop thinking about it and I was under a lot of stress. This might also be the reason you have insomnia.

Are you under a lot of stress? Are you having difficulty studying new subjects or communicating with family and friends? If the answer is yes, feel free to write to me, as it’ll be great to have someone to share your thoughts.

Another possible reason is that your bedroom isn’t really a perfect place for sleeping. Are you having too many distractions while you are going to bed, such as light and noise? Besides, is your bed and pillow comfortable enough?
In order to deal with the problem, you may try adjusting the temperature in your bedroom so that you won’t wake up because of night sweats or because the room is too chilly. You may also wear an eye mask and put in earplugs to black out light and noise. Check if you should change your pillow or mattress for a more comfortable night’s rest. Try not to look at the clock if you can’t sleep as watching time pass might make you more anxious. I got so mad at myself each time I woke up and found out it was only midnight. Furthermore, no matter how busy you are, don’t bring your paperwork to bed. Doing activities such as doing homework or talking on the phone might make it harder for your body to recognize that the bed is for sleeping. It’s not efficient to work on the bed anyway.

I hope my advice can give you a little help. If you’ve tried all the ways I’ve mentioned but the situation hasn’t improved a bit, you should consult a doctor to see if you need any medication. Get well soon! If you have other problems, as I’ve said before, feel free to contact me.

Love,
Rainbow

The Missing Presents

Rainbow Cheng 3B

The house was quiet the right before our big holiday party. I went to check on the decorations when I saw that all the presents were gone! I panicked, and started tearing apart the room looking for any sign of them, but I wasn’t successful. Guests would be flooding into the house the next morning and they would be so disappointed if they found that all the presents were gone. I’d have phoned my friends if I had not lost my phone, but sadly I did. I paced the floor nervously, imagining all the sad faces of the guests.

Suddenly, something on the floor caught my eyes. A trace of footprints appeared near the Christmas tree and went all the way to the door. I went outside the house and found myself in a town coated with snow. It was freezing cold but I was glad that it was snowing, so that I could see the footprints clearly. I followed the footprints, with my eyes fixed on them. Ten minutes passed and it seemed like the footprints would never end. I walked faster, hoping to reach the end soon. I was so nervous that my hands were sweating even in the cold air.

Another ten minutes had passed, and I started looking around while I was walking. Suddenly, I saw the owners of the footprints – a man wearing a big coat. And in his strong arms, he held my presents. He was a thief. I wouldn’t dare go up to him and grab my presents as I didn’t know what he would do to me, but I was still so relieved that I had finally found my presents. I decided to follow the man and see what he’s up to. I walked and walked, and sometimes I had to hide behind a tree or a bin, to make sure he couldn’t see me. It was actually quite safe because I couldn’t even see him clearly because of the darkness.
Finally, he stopped in front of a small house and went in. I quickly squatted down under the window and peered inside. He turned on the lights and put the presents on a shelf. I nearly screamed when I saw his face. He was my best friend Bryan! He had been helping me to arrange the holiday party! How could it be Bryan? I forced myself to calm down and I knew I needed to get those presents back. He’d be embarrassed if I rushed in and accused him of stealing the presents. As a friend, I couldn’t do that. I then figured out a plan and phoned Bryan.

“Bryan? It’s Sally. Can I come over to your home now? I’ve got something to give you, ... for tomorrow’s party.”

I could see Bryan talking on the phone through the window. “Okay, of course. Do you have my address?”

“Yes, I think so, Tim gave me your address the other day. In fact, I’m quite near your house. I’ll be there in a minute.”

I waited outside for a while before I knocked on the door. I was quite surprised to see that he was calm and was pleased to see me. We talked and I pretended not to notice the presents on the shelf. I seized all the presents and put them into my bag when he went to the washroom and I asked to leave right after that. He didn’t notice a thing and I almost reached the door when one of the presents suddenly slid out of my bag. We both froze.

Bryan soon broke the silence and said, “Where are you taking all those presents?”

“Where am I taking them? Why are they even here? They are supposed to be in my house, aren’t they?” I replied, astonished by his question.

“Oh, Tim didn’t tell you, did he? The party’s venue has been changed to my house and so I have moved all the presents to here. I planned to ask you to bring them over here, but I couldn’t reach you, so I went and collected them by myself. You gave me your keys! Remember? You told me that I could go there anytime to help you decorate your house.”

“Oh I’m so sorry Bryan. I thought you were...” My face was burning with embarrassment and I couldn’t continue.

“That’s okay. I’m really a bit suspicious, having gone to your house so late. Sorry for that, because I’ve almost forgotten the presents,” he laughed shyly while saying.

I was really embarrassed for being such a fool and making this huge mistake, but I was relieved to know that the presents were all safe and the party would be take place without a glitch. The best thing of all, my friend was just as honest and helpful as I thought he was.
From the clues I had found so far, the thief was my neighbour, and he or she has studied literature. The young man living next door was a university student who was likely to be studying English Literature. Was he the thief? But why would he steal the presents?

Concentrating on thinking about who the thief was, I bumped into Karlie, a ten-year-old girl living opposite. ‘Are you okay? You look terribly worried,’ she noticed my worry. I then told her the whole story. ‘Oh, that’s horrible,’ she frowned. ‘Well, I hope you will find your presents soon.’ While she was leaving, I caught the last glimpse of her face. An unusual feeling ran through my body. Those eyes were leaking a kind of wisdom that should not be seen in a ten-year-old girl’s eyes. That kind of wisdom had too much maturity and it made me shiver somehow.

Walking back home, my mind was so messy that every ridiculous thought was coming up. ‘Don’t’ be ridiculous,’ I told myself, ‘Karlie wouldn’t steal.’ I shook my head hard, as if I could throw that thought to the trash if I shook hard enough.

However, I couldn’t help suspecting. I scooped out the piece of paper from my pocket and recalled the memory I had of Karlie. Her mother had told me that she was a gifted child but she always kept her emotions secret. Once she snapped all her mother’s pencils just because her mother refused to buy her more. She loved reading, especially Shakespeare’s....

I thought I knew who the thief was.

Hands trembling, I knocked at Karlie’s door. Instantly she opened it, half-smiled, as if she had been waiting for me. ‘May I come in?’ ‘Of course, it is never wrong to look for your own things.’ She beamed, eyes leaking the kind of maturity again. My heart beat fast. Pretending to be calm, I stepped in. I saw a book laying on the coffee table. My legs moved forward automatically till I saw its cover. It’s *Hamlet*. I took out the scrap of paper from my pocket, and finally I realized where it came from.
‘So... you stole them,’ I whispered.

‘Yes, I stole them,’ she answered, with not even the slightest bit of panic in her voice.

‘Was this normal behaviour for a ten-year-old girl?’ I thought. I couldn’t pronounce any words as my teeth were already clenching with fright.

‘You refused me. Do you remember? I asked you once if I could attend your party, but you refused me without a compelling reason. Too many participants already... sorry, I can’t believe it. Like characters in Shakespeare’s play, I need revenge. It is such little revenge that it doesn’t cause you harm, does it?’ she said coldly. At that moment, I had an impulse to ask her if she was actually an adult. She was way too mature and a lot cleverer than she was supposed to be.

She didn’t stop me when I picked up the presents one by one and left. She just stood there staring at me, and I wondered what she was thinking.

Gifted was what everyone desired to be. However, for the first time, I didn’t want to be gifted. Not that they were bad, but they were too mature and too cold that it seemed that they could never join in the world. If Karlie were just an ordinary child, would she live happier without thinking of revenge?

I would never know the answer as I knew there was no ‘if’ in reality.

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He is not What He Looks

John Lee 3C

Finally it’s my 18th birthday. I was glad that I could invite my dear best friend Michael, who is three years older than me, to come to my house to have a simple celebration.

Actually, Michael is strange but wonderful person. I have known him since I joined my church’s Christian fellowship. He always wears weird clothes and even wigs. His shabby appearance and style made him look bad. Everyone who meets him has a bad impression of him and thinks that he is in a teen gang. However, everything inside his heart does not match with his unacceptable appearance. In fact, he is absolutely kind, helpful and hardworking. Michael goes to an elderly home to do voluntary work regularly. Besides, he is always the top student in the class.

Since it was Saturday, my mum didn’t need to work. She stayed at home and prepared some snacks for us. While we were walking to my flat, we were talking about some funny things. Michael was just a humorous guy. Arriving home, we pressed the door bell. I didn’t know why, I just had a bad feeling at that moment. My mum opened the door as usual. ‘Welcome Michael...’ and she suddenly gave an unfriendly look. She glanced at Michael: the ring in his nose, the huge purple spiky wig on his head and the rugged baggy jacket he wore. ‘So, this is the “Michael” that you are always talking about?’ My mum whispered to me, ‘He – a kind and good boy? No way!!!’ ‘Hey mum, just relax! It’s a misunderstanding.’ She made a mad look and shouted, ‘No, I don’t think so! And I’ll not welcome such a gruesome monster into my house!’
Desperately, we went downstairs to have a walk. Michael became very miserable, ‘Oh no, my clothes and my look made your mum so angry,’ he said desperately. ‘No, it’s not your fault...’ I replied.

Meanwhile, there was a person crossing the busy road. He was listening to music, wearing a large pair of headphones. He did not notice that an enormous Mercedes Benz was rushing towards him! ‘No! Stop!’ The passersby shrielled at once in unison, including Michael. He wanted to shove the guy aside in order to rescue him—but it was too late. My heart skipped a beat and heard a loud crashing sound. It was terrible. The injured man was lying on the ground, bleeding and quivering. Everyone was stunned. Just then, only Michael dashed towards him, looking serious. Michael quickly helped him by stopping the bleeding and checked whether he was breathing well. At the same time, I dialed 999 to call the police.

An ambulance came very soon and took the man to the hospital. Michael was about to leave but was interrupted by a hand on his shoulder. ‘You did a great job, Michael! Sorry for being so rude. And you’re right, John. It was a misunderstanding. I’ve made a goof. I swear I won’t judge people by their appearance again!’ Michael was speechless and couldn’t understand everything at once. Finally, he was delighted and gave us a wide grin.

A Strong Country Made of Steel and Sweat

Thomas 3C

The 2012 London Olympics is all over, but some scenes still stay vividly in my mind. On 27th July 2012, the opening ceremony was held in London. The British spent loads of money and time to prepare for this opening ceremony. The show was excellent and the first part was the most unforgettable scene for me.

The opening started off with hundreds of people wearing historical costumes rushing onto the stage. They rolled up the massive grass mat and started building up factories. After that, they worked in the factory to make steel. Special effects like strong fire, sparkling light and thundering noise were made. Eventually, they made the five rings of the Olympics logo.

The opening showed the determination of the British at the time of the Industrial Revolution. The people were so co-operative and hardworking that they made their dreams come true. Although they went through some challenging and exhausting times, they did not give up and finally a country that they were proud of was forged. It was named – Great Britain.

From the 2012 London Olympics opening ceremony, we got a chance to review the history of the Industrial Revolution as well as its influence on Britain and the world. It makes me understand that people have to work together in order to succeed. The brilliance of a country comes from the unceasing hard work of its people. As a Chinese, I think we should process this spirit. I hope to see a strong and prosperous China in which everyone is living happily. Therefore, every Chinese, including we teenagers, should work hard on reaching this goal!
What a Mystery!
Crystal Chuk 3D

It was 1850 in China. The Taiping Rebellion had broken out, making everything unsafe – rebels confiscated freakish or exotic things just because they hated foreigners and wanted to destroy everything from foreign countries. Chuk Ying-Toi, a Chinese old man, looked no more than an ordinary man, but indeed, was a friend of an alien from Saturn. In order to keep the gifts from the alien safe, he put them in a chest and burrowed it deep in the sand in a remote area. He also wrote a letter about aliens and the truth of the rebellion, and put it inside the box.

It was a nice autumn Sunday 148 years later. It was sunny but still cool, so Christy and Ivan brought Coffee, their Border Collie, to the countryside to have a barbecue. Everything seemed normal at first, until Coffee was alerted suddenly. It then kept sniffing around and it seemed to be searching for something. It finally stopped and started to dig – Coffee eventually dug out a huge chest!

Christy and Ivan were totally astonished. The chest was full of hi-tech apparatuses, with inscriptions in an unknown language and they were made of unfamiliar materials. ‘Hey Chris, there’s a letter!’ Ivan exclaimed. ‘Let’s read it.’ Christy took the letter out with her shaking hand. She carefully opened the envelope and started reading.

They were flabbergasted after reading the letter. In the letter they discovered facts that proved the Taiping Rebellion was organized by aliens!

Ivan grabbed one of the apparatus and shouted, ‘Oh! Maybe we can use this phone-like thing to contact the aliens and ask them about that!’ ‘Nooooo...’ Christy was trying to stop him. However, it was already too late. Ivan pressed the radical green button on the apparatus, and then a weird creature loomed in front of them.

It was reddish brown in colour, with a big mouth on top of its four blue eyes. Three of them were all shocked and stood there in silence. After a few seconds, the alien realized what was happening. First, it opened its enormous mouth. Then its body turned from brown to red and sent out a flash of light. The light covered Christy and Ivan and they disappeared. They were never seen on earth again. What a mystery!
The Most Impressive Moment in the 2012 Summer Olympics

Crystal Chuk 3D

The most unforgettable scene of the Olympics for me was Viktoria Komova’s performance on floor in the women’s individual all-around final. Her performance was the most elegant one I have ever seen.

Floor was the last event of women’s individual all-around final, and Viktoria Komova was the last athlete to perform. At that time, she was 16 points behind Gabrielle Douglas who was in first place. She needed to score at least 16 points in order to become the champion, which meant her performance had to be done perfectly. She was so nervous that she kept taking deep breathes. At the same time, however, I could also see her strong determination to become the champion.

Music began and the performance started. Komova started with a graceful pose, followed by some consecutive somersaults, side airsprings and turns. The actions were so delicate and she landed perfectly every time. After some piked jumps and dancing, the performance finished in a series of turns and somersaults and a beautiful landing. The performance was fabulous. All challenging jumps and loops were done glamorously without a single mistake. A victorious smile filled her face right after performing, as if she had already won the gold medal.

However, the result was disappointing. Komova got only 15 points and placed second overall. She immediately burst into tears while Douglas was grinning and waving at the audiences. Despite the great disappointment on losing the gold medal, Komova still showed her sportsmanship and shook hands with Douglas.

Komova’s experience reminds me that we may not always get what we expect even when we have tried our best. However, it is not the most important thing for us to win, but to make every effort and show our best. No one would blame us so we do not have to blame ourselves. Just do better next time to achieve what we want.
In our old, huge world, there was a boy. He was no different from any of us. Pimp was the name of the boy. As the name suggested, he was an only child and he was eleven years old. And this boy loved adventures and was curious about everything. And ... that was me!

‘Ding ...’ the noisy alarm clock woke me up from my sleep and disrupted my wonderful dream. ‘Another boring day,’ I murmured to myself. All of a sudden, I remembered that today was a big day for me. I would go to the dinosaur exhibition today, so I went to school with a happy mood. Meanwhile, I met my classmate, Diego.

Before long, we were at the museum.

‘Diego?’ ‘Yes, I’m here,’ replied Diego. Then our new teacher said, ‘Okay then, we have to move now in order to eat... Oops, no... I mean, students, let’s begin our amazing journey to the world of dinosaurs. Come with me!’

Actually, I really didn’t think our new teacher was a good guy. Besides, I thought he was weird. But after a moment, when I saw those epic, fantastic, great and enormous dinosaurs, I couldn’t help feeling excited and happy and I forgot about the weird teacher. Then, my teacher started to say, ‘Ha ha, these things surprise you, do they?’ We nodded and the teacher went on to say, ‘The dinosaurs in front of you is one of the ...’ ‘Oh man, it’s just so boring! Let’s get out of here and explore another place!’ Diego told me and I, of course, said yes.

‘Look! There’s the sign! Let’s go!’ cried Diego. I followed him until we entered another exhibition hall; somehow it looked like ‘the Chamber of Secret’. I looked at the things around – this chamber was surrounded by four giant white walls with an exit leading to the outside (the exit we used) and it was quiet. It was so quiet that it made me feel sick, and in the centre of this room, there stood one dinosaur. We walked towards it, shaking with fright. Then we saw the name of the dinosaur, ‘STEGOSALFRUS’. When we were about to leave this place, a sudden, ‘Grrrr’ (a long, deep roar) came from behind us. I turned back to check what had happened. But what I saw was a pair of red eyes. It seemed that there was fire in its eyes. At that moment, my face became as pale as a sheet. I felt like there was a sharp knife near my throat and if I dared to move one step, it would cut me. ‘Oh my god! What should I do? Why is this happening to me? I must leave now.’ Just as I thought I was going to die, the dinosaur closed its eyes. ‘This is our chance! Diego and I used all our strength from head to toes to flee from this horrible, freaky place. And no sooner had we started to run than the dinosaur began to chase after us. It went faster and faster, and I saw the sharp teeth inside its disgusting mouth. I was desperate, ‘Sorry mum and dad. I don’t think I can make it.’ I closed my eyes and wished there was heaven when I opened my eyes again. ‘Boom!’ A deafening sound came and I opened my eyes. I saw Diego huffing with a peaceful smile and he said, ‘We made it, friend. We made it ...’ And it seemed that he was too tired and lay down to have a rest. Then I looked at the other side, ‘Where’s the dinosaur?’ But then, some shiny things caught my eye. There was a heap of mechanical parts on the ground! Then I knew that it was only a robot. I felt relaxed and then passed out.

After three days, I finally woke up on my bed and heard, ‘The man creating the disaster three days ago in the museum has been caught and he told the police everything. Now, let us see the little heroes who saved the museum!’ To my surprise, I saw Diego and myself on TV and I could not utter a single word. ‘These two kids were brave and strong. They survived and defeated the monster!’ I felt pleased and calm and wanted to sleep a long sleep and dream about the next adventure that I would have.
Knowing our country
Justin Mak 3D

The Moral and National Education has been a popular topic recently in Hong Kong. Many citizens are against the policy since they are afraid that the next generation will be brainwashed. However, I think that it is essential for us to know more about our own country, of course, both its bright and dark sides. The content of the curriculum is of most concern as it decides what will be instilled in the minds of students.

I think the 1989 Students Movement is an indispensable and crucial topic to be included. The movement took place in Tiananmen Square from April to June in 1989. Some students were resentful of government corruption and inflation, they demonstrated in the square. Eventually, the protest was suppressed by force.

The movement actually reflects how the government at that time treated of their people who held different opinions; they restrained unarmed students by force and claimed that it was a riot. Mentioning the faults made by our country in the past is not a shame; it can prevent our government from making the same mistakes in the future and improve our country. However, concealing the truth and showing only the good side to people will make them ignorant and love their country blindly. People will only despise such a government but not possess a sense of belonging.

In fact, there are things that can make us proud of our identity as Chinese such as China’s economic development and its rising international status. We, as Chinese, should understand our country thoroughly and help our nation to be stronger.

A Letter of Advice – How to Keep a Good Daily Routine
Natalie Hui 3D

Dear Mable,

I’m really sorry to hear that you’re desperate. I definitely don’t mind if you write to me. I’m more than willing to lend you a sympathetic ear. Let me give you some advice and I hope it will help you with your problems.

You’ve mentioned that you’re always exhausted and sleepy because you go to bed late due to finishing your homework and chatting with your friends online. But you know what, my friend? Being a night owl is definitely bad for you, so if I were you, I would finish everything and go to bed as soon as possible so as not to be late for school. Come on, my friend! Make a timetable for yourself and have better time management so that you can have enough rest.

As for the problem about your lagging behind in your studies and not concentrating and dozing off in class, I suggest you try to pay attention in class. You should also go to bed earlier to prevent dozing off and lapses in concentration. You can ask permission to go to the washroom to wash your face when you feel sleepy in class. If you really can’t concentrate in class, I advise you to spend some time to revise your schoolwork and ask teachers or friends for help with anything you don’t understand. You can go to tutorial classes if you want and remember, practice makes perfect, so do more exercise.
You also told me about your worsening health condition. Like what your doctor told you, you really need some rest. So try to go to bed as early as you can! You’d better drink more water and eat more healthy food as well. Do more exercise, my friend! It’ll help you stay strong! Also, don’t forget to avoid junk food!

I really hope my advice can help you. Just remember I’m always here for you and stay positive. Things will get better soon. I wish you nothing but the best.

Look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,

Chris

I Swear to Not Let It Happen Again

Owen Lai3E

“Hey, John, let’s play at my house after school” I yelled so loudly that it could have broken the glass. “But there will be a Maths quiz tomorrow. Miss Lee said it is extremely hard and important. I need to study for it,” he replied. “Oh man! Just forget it.” I laughed at him. “No way! I need to study!” he answered. I told him. “Never mind. I will just play on my own.” “But at that time, I didn’t know what a stupid thing I had chosen to do.

I was a Form Three student who loved computer games a lot. I never studied a lot for any tests or quizzes. When I was a little primary student, I always got high marks in every subject, but my teachers and parents always told me to study as much as possible. At that time, I thought they were crazy so I never listened to a word they said.

During the last year of primary school, I got excellent results and went to a famous Band 1 school. I still kept this bad habit, although I could get good results in the past two years. My parents still didn’t agree with me but I still didn’t realize what my problem was.

I returned home and turned on my computer immediately. Soon I became a “killer” and “shot” all the enemies for a few hours. I had already forgotten about the quiz. I even lied to my parents that I had nothing to do.
OASIS BE GOOD

The sun rose again and it’s time to go to school. I just did nothing and felt relaxed about the quiz. “Have you studied for the quiz? It will be very difficult,” John asked. I told him that I had just played computer games the whole night. He was shocked.

“Put all you books under your chair and keep quiet. I’ll distribute the quiz papers shortly.” Miss Lee ordered us. All the things were ready and we started our quiz. “Oh! My God! What is it!” I was so shocked. The quiz was extremely, extremely hard that I could just fill in the blanks! I just looked at John nervously. He was writing as quick as lightening and finished the whole quiz without stopping. I was very nervous and felt hopeless. What I could just do was to sit there quietly and just wait for the timer to beep. “Time’s up! Stop writing!” Miss Lee announced. When she walked near me and saw my quiz without any answers, she stared at me angrily as if she would punish me.

Finally, Miss Lee returned the quiz the next week. I scored only five marks! I was disappointed. Finally, I recognized what my problem was – I didn’t study. I could get high marks in the past simply because I was lucky. Even if the questions were easy, I should try my best to study for it.

From that day on, I have studied very hard and have never been lazy. Finally, I got the highest marks in each test. I’m proud of myself. It’s life changing for me.

One Special Summer
Vanessa Wong 3E

There are four seasons in a year and each of them are distinctively special from one another. Different people like different seasons because of their own reasons. My favourite season is summer, not because of the seasonal festivals, or the trips abroad during this period of time, but because of one unforgettable memory that was forged one special summer.

Unlike the snowy winter or the chilly autumn, summer is humid and hot in Hong Kong. I remember it was an extraordinarily hot day. However, as soon as I went out, it started raining cats and dogs! I didn’t bring my umbrella. And of course, I got completely drenched!

Running as fast as I could, I ran to a library nearby. The rain lasted for a while. Soon, I started to get more and more impatient. So I decided to call one of my friends to come and rescue me from the drenching rain. Not more than ten minutes later, my friend arrived. Standing right in front of me, he was panting heavily. He rushed all the way to see me! Then, I discovered that his feet were all soaked in his waterlogged shoes. My eyes quickly welled up with tears. I couldn’t believe my dear friends would really do this for me.

Since then, summer has been my favourite season, as I will feel delighted every time it rains. The rain in summer always reminds me of the fondness I have for this dear friend who has never left me ever since that day.
An Unexpected Lesson
Alvin Law 3F

In the year of the Taiping Rebellion, there was a poor farmer and a rich landowner. The farmer was well-built and oval-faced. He had a beard too. One day, the landowner wanted to confiscate the farmer’s land, therefore, the farmer killed him. He put the cadaver into a well-decorated chest and went to a desolate place. He burrowed deep in the sand and put it into the hole. After that, he covered it with sand and thought that no one would ever discover the secret.

After more than a century, two teenagers went to the countryside with a dog to have a picnic. While they were having a barbeque, the dog suddenly began to bark and then ran away. ‘Lovely, where are you going?’ the two teenagers, Tom and Mary, shouted simultaneously.

The dog sniffed and wagged its tail. Afterwards, it started to dig in the sand. Tom and Mary were puzzled and perplexed. The dog looked freakish. Unexpectedly, they found a chest! They were thrilled as they thought the chest was full of treasure. As they began to open it, it started to rain cats and dogs. There was lightning and thunder too!

When Mary opened the chest, they were flabbergasted. ‘Oh my god! It is a man! Is he sleeping?’ Mary screamed. They shivered and went as white as a sheet. They took the chest to a research institute and asked the people there for help. After some experiments, they ascertained that it was an extremely well-preserved corpse from the Qing Dynasty. It was a great scientific discovery. Unpredictably, after this scary adventure, Tom and Mary started to be interested in anthropology.

Finally, they both became famous scientists. Thanks to the unforgettable experience, Tom and Mary became popular and it changed their whole lives. How about the desolate place? A science museum was built and it became a tourist spot!

Get Rid of Depression and Be Happy Again
Chloe Chan 3F

Dear Daniel,

I’ve just received your letter. The frustration and depression in your letter deeply worries me. I don’t know whether my views and suggestions can be of great help to you, yet I’m glad that you’ve spoken out.

I feel sympathy for your dilemma that you feel strangely anxious and depressed. As your best friend, I’m going to give you some suggestions that may help you solve your problems.

First, you definitely ought to regulate your habit, try to find something useful to do in order to fulfill yourself. For instance, traveling can make you feel relaxed and bring you out of depression. Reading is also a good choice. You should also set up a goal; you would receive satisfaction when you fulfill a desire. You mustn’t let yourself have nothing to do anyway.

Apart from that, try to attend some group activities, such as playing ball games. Playing ball games benefits you both mentally and physically. Not only can it help you to forget troubles and ease stress, but you can also make more friends. I’m sure you’ll fall in love with it.

Plus, I advise you to communicate more with your parents and friends. Communication is the only bridge between two parties. Try to express your happiness and troubles. I’m certain your parents and your friends are willing to listen
and share their experiences, so you will not feel lonely and depressed anymore.

If you are still in a state of depression, you’d better seek help from social
workers or psychologists. Their professional knowledge and suggestions must be a
great help to you.

I hope the aforementioned views and suggestions are useful to you. Whatever
advice you take, I hope you can get rid of depression and, be a happy guy again.

Love,
Chloe

To Be or Not To Be
Christine Yum 3F

When it started to rain, they told me that they wanted to borrow my name ...

“Stop kidding! They must be actors from the prank show. I’m no idiot. Are you
trying to fool me? No way!” I muttered to myself. Showing them that I was not
interested, I walked away. They followed me. I hurried my pace and they kept
following. I started to run, fast enough to catch the wind, but they were doing the
same. My face turned as white as a blank sheet. My heart was pounding. I felt my
inside turning inside out. I couldn’t even tell how terrified I was. Suddenly, I felt a
loud “BOOM!” at my back and I fainted.

Only then did I realize that I was in a gruesome room alone. The room was
humid and made me feel uneasy. Minutes later, a group of people walked in. They
pleaded with me to lend them my name. They told me that their village would suffer
from an immense rainstorm an hour later unless they borrowed the names from
“100” chosen people who could save them from this disaster. I couldn’t really
understand what they were talking about. Why was I chosen? It was absurd and
sounded infantile, and they were just too superstitious. How could that strange thing
happen?

I decided to leave, and they let me go, though very reluctantly. “Please, help us,
you are our only hope.” The villagers were whimpering and they looked miserable.
No sooner had I left the house than I felt a ruthless wind, thunder and storm was
alternating between the clouds. I felt very regretful for being so cold-hearted. I burst
into tears and turned back to lend them my name.

A cheer arose from the villagers and they got my name. The wind stopped and
there was no more thunder. I was amazed.

“Good show!” there came the crew, the cameras and the neon lights. How dare
you! They were from the prank show and I was cheated. Poor me! I pleaded with
them not to disclose my name.
**It’s not as Bad as You Think**

Christine Yum 3F

Dear Edith,

Sorry it’s taken so long to write. Your recent letter describing that you’ve been seriously suffering from insomnia sounds as though you feel deeply anxious; you have no idea what you can do to help improve the situation. I can understand the seriousness of the problem and I have discussed your situations with my parents and friends.

From what we have discussed, it seems that you have not yet adapted to your new environment. The fact that you have moved to a new place, having a new house, new neighbourhood and new friends may be the cause of your pressure. I suggest you talk to your parents and I’m certain that they will understand you. Ask them to join some community activities with you so that you can make some new friends.

Also, as you mentioned, you can’t understand your teacher and you feel excluded by your classmates. I feel sympathy for your difficulty since peer pressure and academic pressure are common for new students. In my opinion, you are too shy and introverted. Whenever you are confused, don’t feel embarrassed, take the initiative to ask questions in class. You should also participate in more school activities and try to break the ice between you and your classmates.

Finally, some drinks may also cause insomnia. As I know, you drink coffee every day. No matter how much you enjoy drinking coffee, too much caffeine will make it hard for you to fall asleep.

Don’t give up. It’s not as bad as you think. I hope my advice will be useful to you. Drop me a few lines when you have time and let me know how you get on. Good luck!

Regards,
Christine

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**Love is the Greatest Driving Force to Succeed**

Lois Sit 3F

The 2012 London Olympics was the most fascinating, exciting and touching Olympics Games among all that I have watched. Even though its opening ceremony was not as entertaining as the 2008 Beijing Olympics, its was imbued with victorious moments, touching stories and controversial topics such as Ye Shiwen winning a gold medal at the age of 16. Among all events, Felix Sanchez’s story impressed me the most.

On the TV screen, a middle-aged man, bald and sweaty, was running on the track. He was Felix Sanchez, the 34-year-old Dominican runner. He was wearing trendy sunglasses and a tight uniform. He looked as though he was arrogant and boastful. When the race had just started, he was at the lead of the crowd of athletes.

As time past, they were getting closer and closer to the finishing line. Some of the athletes started to catch up from behind. The stadium became silent; everyone held their breath, anxious to know the result. At the last moment, Sanchez dashed out of the crowd of runners and sprinted to the finishing line. Sanchez won the race with competitive spirit and determination! His fabulous performance touched every audience member, cheering and clapping thundered throughout the stadium.

This glorious moment brought Sanchez to tears. He knelt down on the track and got a photo out of his uniform. It was a photo of his grandmother. His grandmother passed away during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. “I ran terribly and I cried the whole day,” Sanchez said. “After that Olympics, I made a promise that I was going to win a medal for her.” The win gave Sanchez the distinction of the oldest man to win the Olympic 400-meter hurdles.
This is the most unforgettable scene I have ever seen. Sanchez has taught me that life is challenging, it has its ups and downs. During sadness, we must not give up. We must have hope in ourselves because we have family and friends who support us. However, when we are successful, we should be modest about our achievements as our success is a way to show the glory of God.

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An Unexplained Disaster

Nicholas lp 3F

“When the dark clouds were moving over the mountains, I realized what they wanted from me was my shadow.” I had heard of this story several times from my dad since I was a little child. This was an ancient story that really happened to my dad’s grandpa, Tommy, who was one of the survivors in the disaster that had killed most of the people living in the village.

It was a sunny day. Tommy went farming as usual at the crack of dawn. After working for the whole morning, he decided to take a nap in his bed so that he could keep working in the afternoon. When he was taking a nap, he was suddenly woken up by a strange noise. He went out to check out what had happened. He was shocked when he saw some dark clouds moving over the mountains, but there was no lightning or rain. The most horrible thing was that when the clouds covered something they immediately swallowed up its shadow, turning it into a stone and the clouds would become bigger and bigger.

Just a few seconds later, he saw his best friend, Jack, had been turned into a stone. Although Tommy was very depressed, he had no time to help him since the clouds kept moving towards him. So all he could do was to run as fast as he could.

When Tommy ran away from the dark clouds, he thought of a way that would destroy the dark clouds – it was to use mirrors to reflect the sunlight to the clouds so that the clouds would be evaporated. So the survivors collected all the mirrors they had and placed them on the ground to attack the dark clouds. After fighting for an hour, the clouds disappeared and they saw the sun again.

Until now, no scientist can explain why it had happened.

Suddenly, I heard someone scream behind me ...
The Rain’s Revenge
Sabi Tang 3F

When it started to rain, they told me that they wanted to borrow my name, “Sun”, in order to rescue the people who were suffering from the flood in the village.

I am the sun and I have a mysterious power to evaporate water by my own heat. Some villages hate me so much as they often have droughts. But for this village, they borrowed my name, and they did it at the right time.

How dare the rain make them suffer like that? I saw that all buildings were collapsing and all the farms were submerged by the flood. I had no idea why the rain could be so merciless and cruel. Some villagers were screaming and yelling for help. Some drowned and their corpses were floating in the water. I couldn’t simply let it go on. It’s time for my turn.

I extended all my heat to the ground but it didn’t work, as the rain was too heavy. I asked the rain, “Why do you have to be so merciless? Can’t you see the people are dying?” The rain replied, “People in the city have built many factories that emit lots of polluting gases, which means lots of poison, and that really makes me sick! I feel grieved and angry so I must let them know the consequence of doing that to me. They deserve such a punishment.”

“I know the situation you are in. I think people realize the consequences now, so could you stop your revenge? I hope you could give them a chance.” I told the rain calmly and it agreed at last.

The rain had stopped and I used my power to evaporate the flood. Soon, everything went back to normal. The villagers appreciated my effort and I felt like a hero. This reminded me of a sentence: When God gives you an ability, He gives you a responsibility simultaneously.

Things are Not that Bad
Stephanie Chik 3F

Dear Daniel,

I can see why you feel so downhearted and hopeless by the situation you are in. I can feel that it is unpleasant to suffer from depression.

From where I stand, I am quite sure that the main reason why you feel so depressed is because of the pressure. I am not definitely sure whether your pressure comes from your parents, peers or academic studies, but I can tell you that it is important for you to relax. For example, I would advise you to read more comics, and watch comedies or funny movies, which can make you laugh. As you know, smiling can make you feel happy and helps release pressure.

On the other hand, I suggest you join some activities after school or during your leisure time. It is because when you enjoy your time doing these activities, you won’t think too much and this helps you deal with the pressure you face.

Also, it is important for you to do more exercise with your friends, such as jogging. You ought to get out into fresh air. This will help you to concentrate better and feel more relaxed. Remember, don’t give up your exercise! Moreover, you can try to eat some chocolate as a snack. Research has shown that the chemical phenyl ethylamine in dark chocolate can improve your mood.

Whatever advice you take, I think you must talk with your parents about this issue. If your situation hasn’t improved or in fact is even getting worse, you’d better visit the doctor. You mustn’t let yourself get even more frustrated. Try to be optimistic, things are not that bad. Good luck.

Love,
Stephanie
Staying Young as a Teenager Forever
Royston Poon 4A

Since ancient times, all humans hoped that they could live forever and they could keep their youth, the main point is they won’t die, and can live forever. Like the kings in China, they have spent much time researching for a medicine, which could help them to keep young eternally. The famous champion of tennis Pete Sampras once said that he was glad to win a championship every year and hoped that he wouldn’t change, his body would not become feeble, and his physical strength and tennis skills would not be lost.

If I could choose to stay the same age all my life, I would prefer to be a teenager. Teenagers have a lot of vitality. At school life, we can meet many new friends, join a lot of activities and teams, and also serve others. Although teenagers need to focus on their homework, projects and exams, they can try different exciting and challenging things. When we are young, we can do everything we want, because teenagers have enough energy and they can learn things fast. So, I’m glad to be a teenager.

You may ask me that why I did not choose another stage?

First, I won’t choose to be a baby, because I think that babies need to be taken care of, and have to rely on adults. It is troublesome. Babies can’t go anywhere because they can’t walk. Their legs have not grown and developed enough. They can’t control themselves and always pee on the bed. So I won’t want to be a baby.

After that, I won’t choose to be an adult. Adult’s work is very horrible and painful. They need to earn money for his/her children. An adult needs to go to work and please their boss. An adult needs to face the problems of their family. Adults not only need to take care of their children, but also their parents. They do not even have time to play and relax!

At last, I won’t choose to be an elderly person because I think that they always have health problems, like heart disease or cancer. They can’t go anywhere they want because of their poor physical condition. Elderly stage is boring because even though they have the heart to go for a trip or try some new things, they could not achieve it, they lose their memory easily and that is the most unacceptable thing in the world, that you can’t remember your family.

In conclusion, I prefer to be a teenager all my life, because teenagers have energy to play and work, they may meet many friends and have new life experiences. If I were a teenager all my life, I would definitely tell myself “Just do it!” and “work hard and play hard!”
The Crocodile
Wong Kin Yan 4A

The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw...

Sammy’s house was messy, his pillow was torn and the feathers had come out and were scattered everywhere. Sammy’s favourite lamp was smashed and over turned. Sammy’s favourite jeans were covered in with coca cola. He was very angry, for puddles of water were on the floor and his room was all in a mess. First, he thought a thief had broken into his house, but there was nothing missing and his money was still at home. Suddenly, he realized his crocodile was not at home, thereby knowing who the “thief” was.

Sammy decided to embark on a mission, to find his crocodile and punish it. At this moment, he saw his crocodiles’ tail out of his room’s window, then Sammy chased after it, but it was really running too quickly. Sammy chased after it to a forest and saw a lot of crocodiles together with Sammy’s stuff, snacks and food. Sammy wondered why his crocodile “stole” his things, thereby tiptoeing to see what was happening. Sammy walked towards a bush shakily and hid behind it. After a while, Sammy saw three baby crocodiles rush out from under bush. This time, it really scared Sammy. The following scene, in Sammy’s eyes, was touching and unforgettable. Sammy’s crocodile pushed his stuff to the three baby crocodiles, then the three baby crocodiles started to eat Sammy’s food and snacks.

At that moment, Sammy realized his crocodile just wanted to give the food and clothes to its babies to comfort them! Sammy was touched. He understood every parent would use any way possible to provide the best thing for their child, so he decided to let Tong Kong Estate become full of love.

At last, Sammy brought his own crocodile back, including its little baby crocodiles. When Sammy got back home with his crocodile and its baby crocodiles, Sammy was shocked because his house was tidy and neat again. He wondered why and found that there was a pair of woman shoes in his home.

“Hi, my dear, welcome home?” a woman called from the kitchen. Sammy knew that it was his mom, and rushed to hug her, thinking that all mothers were great.

With this revelation of love, Tong Kong Estate was never the same again.
Delightful Childhood

Irene Hui 4B

In our ever-changing life, we will have a lot of experiences, going through many stages. In different stages, we undergo different things, like a baby drinks milk from the mother’s bosom, a child goes to a kindergarten, a teenager worries about love and an adult goes to work and an elderly person enjoys retirement. Some of them are happy, but some of them are fretful. If I could stay the same age all my life, which stage would I prefer to be? In my opinion, would prefer to be a child.

Personally, I want to be a child all my life because being a child is delightful. A child does not have many problems to solve. Their main duty is studying. A child in kindergarten or primary school has less homework and exams than a teenager in secondary school. So they usually have less pressure than a teenager or an adult. And I love a life with very few pressures. But some people would say, “A baby must not have any pressure, must it? So why do you want to be a child more than a baby?” In my opinion, a baby will only eat, cry, sleep and drink. They must have people to take care of them all the time. They don’t know about feelings, about being happy or unhappy. They rely on the people around them. But I don’t want to always depend on people. On the other hand, a child is healthy. A child seldom has severe illness, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. Overall, being a child is much happier and more meaningful.

Moreover, a child is a junior in the family, so they do not have any economic responsibility. They don’t need to work, or to give money to the family and there is no need to worry about the things that happened at home. A child always smiles and, to a certain extent, they give a lot of positive energy to their relatives. I remember when I was a child, my mother always told me, she had been so angry from scolding her students at school, but when she had returned home, and had seen my naive smile with the small dimples, she would become happy and relaxed. So a child gives many blessings to people around them. I hope I can be a child all the time.

Children are usually a group of optimistic people in society. Their parents always protect them. For example, when the moral and national education was to be implemented, parents were worried that their child will be brainwashed at school. So they set up an organization to challenge the government for the welfare of their children. This shows children are the most important people in society. If they do something wrong, many of them will be forgiven. And there are too many punishments for harming a child in society. Being a child is a blessing.

Consequently, I prefer to be a child. But I know I am a teenager now, I can never go back to the past. Although I enjoyed this time of my life, as I grow up, I still have to walk along the uneven road of life by myself. So being a child all my life is my dream.
The Innocence of a Child

Samuel Cheung 4B

If I could stay the same age all my life, I would prefer to be a child. It is because I think childhood is the most innocent, the happiest time and is filled with the most recollections in one’s lifetime.

Children are the most innocent because they are young. There are lots of things that they do not understand. In their world, all things are wonderful and simple. Moreover, all the people around them are kind to them. Therefore, they think the world is beautiful. However, when you grow up, you need to face a lot of problems. There are lots of pressures from school, friends or even relationships. That’s why I would prefer to be a child.

Also, childhood is the happiest stage of life because they do not need to worry about anything and they do not need to buy anything. If they have done something wrong, they will not be severely punished. Whereas if you are an adult, you have responsibilities to foster a family. Therefore, adults need to work and they may suffer from that but a child does not need to.

Finally, a child can feel happy more easily than other ages can. They can enjoy themselves by even simply playing some toys or eating some candies. Comparing them to the elderly, who may have health problems, and who have no energy to do what they want, that’s why I won’t choose to be an elderly person.

In fact, we cannot stay the same age all our life. It is impossible! Although all the age groups have their defects we should make life in each stage splendid!

Mysterious Crocodile

Samuel Cheung 4B

The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw...

When he stepped into his home, he saw the stupendous crocodile crawling out through his window. He thought that it was a vision because the crocodile was just a baby this morning. He was frozen with fear and he could not utter a word. After the crocodile vanished, Sammy got over the fear. He discovered that his home was destroyed by the crocodile. There were some puddles of water on the floor too. The lamp was broken and overturned on the floor.

Sammy shrilled, “Oh my goodness! What is this bad smell?” He saw his flat was in a mess. He went mad after he saw his favourite pillow was also torn. There also was a pair of jeans on the floor and a single shoe under the bed.

Sammy discovered that the bad smell came from the bathroom because that door was open. Suddenly, there was a knock at the flat’s door. Sammy opened the door slowly and he saw his mother’s angry face.

“I have already told you that you are not to keep that crocodile in our home. Why did you not listen to me? Our neighbours have already called the police. Start thinking about how to explain that to the police!” said Sammy’s mum insanely.

The police arrived soon and they strove to fetch the crocodile but they failed. The police condemned Sammy’s foolish behaviour and Sammy promised that he wouldn’t keep that dangerous pet again.

No one has seen the crocodile since. It vanished like a specter. Even now, it still terrifies the Sammys neighbours. Since that day, Tong Kong Estate was never been the same.
Should Schools Offer Cash Bonuses for Good Academic Results?

Jinny Yeung 4C

In Hong Kong, everything is fiercely competitive. It is a place of survival for the fittest. People need to keep improving themselves so that they can outperform other competitors and survive. Some schools therefore encourage those who have good results in their exams by offering cash bonuses. Actually, is it a good means to improve students’ studies?

It is often argued if schools should offer cash bonuses for good academic results. In my opinion, schools should offer cash bonuses for outstanding students.

To begin with, some may argue that offering cash bonuses may not really appeal to students. Nowadays, parents always give their children more than enough pocket money. That is why students may not be interested in or work hard to get the cash bonuses. They can simply get extra pocket money from their parents. However, I believe not every student is indifferent to monetary reward. In subsidized schools, there are lots of students from families that are facing financial problems. They can choose to work harder in exams, achieve higher marks and then obtain the cash bonuses so as to lighten their parents’ burden. Cash bonuses can be the incentive for the students to study hard and crave high marks in exams.

Some people tend to say that providing cash bonuses will instill a wrong message in young children. The children will become very money-minded and regard money as the panacea for every problem. Yet, schools and parents both have the responsibility to guide them to distinguish the right from wrong. Students should not just work hard for the cash bonuses. They should uphold the correct value, which is to work hard for their own future. Students must understand that the more diligent they work now, the more they can achieve when they grow up. What’s more, students cannot only receive cash bonuses, they can also win the recognition from their teachers, classmates and parents. The outstanding students can also be the role models of other students as the others will follow them and create a more active learning atmosphere.

Last but not least, some may ask, “Should stationery be rewarded instead of cash?” To my mind, money is the best reward for students because they can spend the money on whatever they want. Students should be allowed their own choice to buy what they want, so cash is the most practical reward.

To conclude, I agree that schools should offer cash bonuses for good academic results.
The Adorable Little Creature

Jinny Yeung 4C

Have you ever met an alien? Well, I did, yesterday morning on the way to school. There I was sitting on the bus when I suddenly felt something staring at me. I turned around only to discover that my boyfriend Max was standing right behind me with an alien mask on his face. He took his mask off and looked really down because his tricks did not scare me. I felt really annoyed about his stupid tricks. The reason which nearly drove me crazy was that Max was acting the same every morning on the bus, although his tricks always failed.

Max was an alien friend. He loved to talk about aliens. Every time I met him, he always told me about aliens, even though I never actually believed in aliens myself. When someone mentioned aliens, he would immediately become a chatterbox.

Time flew; it was the end of the school day. I decided to stay behind to wait for Max until his Alien Club activities were over. When I was concentrating on my schoolwork, the lights suddenly went out. I thought it was Max’s silly tricks again so I walked to the light control. At that moment, I heard some sound; it was like a baby whimpering. I turned on the lights but Max was not there. I followed the source of the sound trying to figure out where the noise came from. Simultaneously, the room temperature dropped lower and lower abruptly. I felt alarmed and horrified. I discovered that there was a little creature which was surrounded by a glimmer of light on the floor. My curiosity drove me to walk near it. It was an alien baby. I was really shocked. The alien baby had a pair of unusually big eyes on a round head, two slightly pointed big ears and a small mouth. I could not believe what I was looking at. I blinked my eyes several times to make sure that I was not hallucinating. It peeked at me as if I were its mother. It opened its little green hands as if it was trying to hug me. I thought it was cute and adorable, so I lifted it up and held it like a human baby.

The alien baby stopped crying and was sound asleep. I wanted to find out why this little creature would appear on planet Earth so I went to look for Max. Max and his other alien friend saw the creature in my arms and became dumbfounded. After a second, they realised what they were looking at and became really exhilarated. Someone even suggested dissecting the alien baby. When Max and his friends calmed down a bit, I asked them if they knew where the alien had come from. They searched through their alien books and the Internet but in vain. When we were working hard to search for an answer, the baby alien was awake. It played with our books on the desk. We came towards it and started to play with it. It laughed happily in a strange but funny voice. Besides its appearance, its movements and thoughts were just the same as any other human baby on Earth.

Meanwhile, strange things happened. The lights went off again! Some blue and yellow light illuminated the floor and a spaceship full of aliens appeared from underground. The baby alien started to fly up the air into the spaceship. Suddenly, the light was on again and everything was back to normal. All of us were frozen.

Even though only the few of us knew what had happened that day, we had proved that there were really aliens in the world. And the most unexpected fact was that aliens did not come from the sky but from underground. This became my best experience ever. Also, Max and I would miss the little adorable alien we met that afternoon.
The Crocodile that Brings Peace

Joseph Chan 4C

The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw—his room was in a terrible mess.

Sammy saw the bathroom door was open. He saw many pools of water on the floor. It made up a road passing from the bathtub to the window. There was a pillow which was torn on Sammy’s bed with many of the pillow’s feathers everywhere. The cabinet was open and the lamp was overturned on the floor. The window was open, so Sammy thought his crocodile had climbed out. But Sammy couldn’t understand why the golden accessories in the cabinet had disappeared.

Then, Sammy went to the police station, and told the police all he knew. The police said that if they found anything about this case, they would call Sammy.

Sammy was very worried about his crocodile. He was determined to find his crocodile. He tried looking for it in a park, on the street, and even his school... Finally, he found his crocodile in a river! His crocodile was biting a man. The man had a dark complexion and with curly hair. He was an obese person. Sammy called for help immediately. After five minutes, the police arrived and caught Sammy’s crocodile. The police asked the man what had happened but he just said he had taking a walk near the river when the crocodile bit him. The police thought he was lying.

The police searched the man’s pocket, and there were some gold jewellery. Obviously, the police suspected that he had stolen the gold, so the man told the police the truth. The man said he broke into the house sneakily and stole the gold, but Sammy’s crocodile discovered him and wanted to protect the gold. He ran away immediately. The crocodile chased after him and climbed out the window. The crocodile found him in the river and attacked him. The man was sent to the hospital and charged with the crime by the police.

After the incident, no one would break the law because of Sammy’s crocodile. The crocodile kept the peace at the estate. Tong Kong Estate was never the same.

My Favorite Stage in Life

Lai Chung Yan 4C

Nowadays, women like to undergo beauty treatments to keep their build slim, complexion fair, and hair permed, all for one reason—they want to keep their beauty and youth. If you asked me which age of my life I would prefer to stay forever, I would answer that I would want to be an adult. I would like to give you three reasons for my choice—freedom, wisdom and good health.

Everyone wants freedom. “The best road to progress is freedom’s road,” as John F. Kennedy once said. I think adults have the most freedom of all age groups. They have the freedom of speech, freedom of marriage, do whatever they want without the need to get parents’ permission, and can go anywhere they want. Adults can date their lovers without needing to get permission from anyone, and they can even get married. They can go out at night; they can even buy anything they they choose. If you are a baby, you can’t buy anything you like. You need to get everything from your parents. If you are a child, everything you do is what your parents want you to do. When you are a teenager, you need to follow school regulations without the choice to do what you like. When you are an elderly person, you need to be a model human being and you must control yourself. Everyone wants freedom, and adults can enjoy the maximum freedom.

“Those who know are wise. Those who know themselves are enlightened,” as Laozi once put it. When you are an adult, you are more mature and can solve any problems you encounter. Adult’s knowledge is vast. However, a baby knows nothing about things in the world, they just know how to cry and eat. Children can just answer questions on school tests, but how about taking care of themselves? They can’t! Teenagers fall in love easily but don’t know what to do. They just keep dating with lovers, but that is not real love. When you become an elderly person, you may start to develop amnesia and always forget what you have done because you have lost your memory. However, adults have keen minds and wisdom to face
Adults also have a healthy bodies and are usually well-built. Health is the greatest gift. Health is the most important thing in our life, not wealth, nor beauty. Although children, babies and teenagers also have healthy bodies, their bodies have not yet developed fully. The elderly do not have healthy bodies and they have lots of illnesses. So adults can enjoy life more than people of other stages of life.

If I would have to choose a stage to stay forever, I would prefer to be an adult for adults have freedom, wisdom and health.

Rescue My Planet
Sophie Cheung 4C

Have you ever met an alien? Well I did, yesterday morning on the way to school. There I was sitting on the bus when I had a terrible dream that thousands and thousands of aliens were chasing me angrily. I kept running and screaming. Suddenly, a “pop” sound woke me up. I rubbed my eyes and people around me were snoring and sleeping soundly. “Don’t worry! It’s only a dream,” I whispered to myself. I peered through the window, gray clouds were floating in the sky, they seemed very “blue”. As it was early in the morning, there was not even a glimmer of sunlight.

Seeing this boring weather, a sense of depression rose from my heart. “Bee-ee!” an annoying noise disturbed my thought and a strange black silhouette caught my attention on the seat of the bus. When this weird silhouette became bigger, I stopped breathing. “Woo!” I screamed loudly, an abnormal weird “gentleman” in a tidy black suit appeared. He had light green skin and two big eyes, which almost covered his entire face. Surprisingly, he was so short that he only reached my uniform belt. “Who are you?” my voice was shaking. “I am an alien journalist from Planet 111. Please don’t be frightened!” he said kindly.

At that moment, I looked around at the other people on the bus. They were all frozen, no one moved and no one breathed except me! “They can’t see me because I am only visible to you. I will follow you for the next few days to learn the daily routines of humans!” he explained. I was totally speechless and obeyed his order. Getting off the bus, I walked with the alien on the streets and both of us were silent. I was so embarrassed to let the alien see the polluted environment with litter everywhere and the black toxic smoke from vehicles. He took photos everywhere and jotted down some notes in his tiny notebook.
Finally, I arrived at school and went back to my seat quietly. No one greeted me or smiled at me every school day. I didn’t really care although I still hoped to have friends... The alien asked, “Why don’t you chat with your classmates?” “Sorry. I hate doing this!” I roared in anger. He was petrified and kept taking photos of my classroom. “Oh my god! The boys again,” I murmured. “Hey! Poor girl! Lonely girl! Actually, do you have any friends? Ha!” they laughed loudly. I was ashamed because the alien was watching this terrible scene! I wanted to control myself, but tears kept running down my eyes.

After the long school day, I gazed at the alien’s notebook while we were going back home.” Destroy This Planet” caught my eyes. “What? Are you going to destroy my planet? Why? Give me a reason!” I exclaimed.” I can’t see any reason for keeping this uncaring planet!” he grunted. “But this is my home. I love it very much. Please stop your plan!” I whimpered. “Well, your planet isn’t worth my kindness, unless you can show me that love exists on your planet!” he replied seriously.

Day and night my little brain strived to think of the love on my planet. “Songs! I could write a song about love!” I yelled. I started to write the love song and practiced it with my piano. Although it was absolutely tedious work, I had to do it to save my parents, my hometown and of course my planet! I was frustrated sometimes when I sang the wrong lyrics. I was miserable when I played the wrong melody. It scared me when I imagined that my planet would be destroyed. Finally, that day had come!

I went to the hall at lunchtime. I walked near the piano. “Be brave!” I said to myself. I started singing my love song. People in the school started looking at me, they felt strange but after a moment they were mesmerized. I was so delighted to see their expression. I enjoyed my performance and I found that I loved singing! The performance ended, I went back home to meet the alien, only to find that he had vanished.” Where have you gone?” I shouted. Did he watch my performance? Was my song full of love?” I wondered.

Months and months passed, and my planet hadn’t been destroyed. Suddenly, a package appeared in my bedroom. I opened it immediately; it was a magazine from Planet 111. It was all about my planet and the author was the alien. “I can see there is love on this planet, I almost missed it...” the alien wrote.

I cried my eyes out, for the story in the magazine was so touching. This alien not only helped me to build my confidence, he also saved my planet.
Two are Better than One!
Ellen Lau 4D

Over the years, whether to have one or two children has been very controversial. There have been heated arguments and debates when it comes to financial, emotional and educational issues. There have been split opinions over it. Some people believe having one child is better as they can give the child ‘the best of the best’. On the other hand, there are many people who believe having two children is better for children’s psychological development. In this essay, I am going to discuss both the pros and cons of this debatable issue.

One advantage of having one child is that the parents can devote all their time and money to their offspring, providing them with the best material aids and comfort. Children do not have to compete for parents’ affection which in turn would make their childhood less competitive. According to some research, most single children are high-achievers in most career fields. They are more independent due to their tendency to amuse themselves in reading, drawing and talking while alone.

It is clear that there are strong reasons for having only one child. However, there are also diverse reasons for having more than one child. I will list the advantages of having more than one child in the following paragraphs.

Some people claim that having only one child is better as they can provide the ‘best of the best’ for the child. In my opinion, the virtue of knowing how to share properties and feelings are much more important. Having siblings is a way to learn how to play, work and communicate effectively with other children which is a vital interpersonal skill in our life. As psychologists have confirmed, single children are more self-centered, fearful and shy in comparison to children who have siblings.

While single children tend to be high-achievers at school, most of them lack essential communication skills, which are indispensable to the success of their career. We no longer live on a one-man island and with the globalization of the world, associating and socializing with colleagues, bosses and business partners is of the utmost importance. Children with siblings will definitely earn an edge in it.

On balance, the advantages of having more than one child outweigh the advantages of having only one child. To pave the road and a bright future for our children, we should start thinking of having a second child for the sake of our kids!
Classrooms Alone Cannot Breed Excellence

Lipmann Wong 4D

A Chinese proverb goes like this, “Reading ten thousand books is not as useful as traveling ten thousand miles.” I absolutely agree with this. Some parents are urging our school to organize more local field trips to replace some of the lessons. They claim that it will allow students to have more exposure to different types of knowledge. I will express my opinions on this issue.

I have recently watched a TV program which interviewed ten celebrities in Hong Kong and asked them to introduce their best teachers. One of the most impressive interviews from the program was Mr Lam Chiu Ying’s. He is the former director of the Hong Kong Observatory. He mentioned that his best teacher was his Geography teacher in secondary school who not only taught them knowledge in the classroom, but also organized local field trips for them to go to different islands in Hong Kong. Mr Lam expressed that these local field trips had significantly increased his interest in the subject.

In recent years, field-trip learning has become very popular in some foreign and advanced countries like America and Japan. They use the “activity approach” and local field trips to teach students in many subjects. This method could be quite effective in motivating students to take the initiative to learn.

In my opinion, students may not concentrate in lessons when they are taught knowledge from textbooks. In this situation, local field trips can increase challenges and novelty in learning. It will be easier for students to retain the knowledge through this type of interesting and motivating style of learning.

To understand this better, here are a few examples of local field trips which promote learning. Going to different kinds of museums in Hong Kong can increase students’ interest in different subjects. For History lessons, going to Hong Kong Museum of History can expose students to rich historic materials which they cannot find in textbooks. For Science lessons, going to Hong Kong Science Museum is very suitable for students to do many interesting experiments. For Art lessons, going to Hong Kong Museum of Art can inspire students to learn more about the culture, art and music of foreign countries. On top of these, teachers can organize eco-tours and camping trips for Geography lessons. Last but not least, we must have on-site inspections in order to understand our community clearly.

Besides learning the knowledge from the lessons, interesting learning from local field trips is very efficient for students to absorb knowledge. Moreover, it will be easier for students to consolidate the knowledge deeply. I therefore understand why some parents are urging our school to organize more local filed trips to replace some of the lessons.
Drink and Drive
Lo Lok Lam 4D

In the past, driving under the influence of alcohol was a rare phenomenon, but now it is a popular trend that causes concerns and worries. I used to be a drunk driver who killed a father and his daughter. I turned his family’s life upside down by murdering their breadwinner. I ruined their lives. The reason I am writing this article is, I turned over a new leaf and want to share with you my experience and regrets.

I can still vividly recall, it was my friend’s wedding banquet. I had a great night and drank a few bottles of red wine. Like all the other drunk drivers, I thought I was resistant and immune to the effects of alcohol. The fact is I was intoxicated but I didn’t realize it. As usual, I drove myself home, on the way, a fatal car accident happened when I ran over them. If I had realised the speedway had ended at the cemetery, I wouldn’t have driven while being drunk. I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

Taking into account all these factors, I suggest the government should implement both short and long term measures to alleviate the problem.

For short-term measures, stronger enforcement of existing laws, revoking driving licenses and increasing the maximum fine are three feasible ways to stop those disasters from happening. Carrying out frequent random breath test, road blocks on streets and major roads during festive seasons can also show how firm we are on a zero tolerance towards drink driving.

To prolong the effects of the campaign, long-term measures should also be performed. Courses like driving improvement course, workshops on the importance of driving safely and anti-drink and drive campaigns can be carried out to serve this purpose. Education and school tours for the youth are equally vital to cease this homicidal behaviour.

Only when one realises driving under while drunk is both socially unacceptable and wrong, they will stop driving. Do bear in mind that you are sharing the road with others. Actions speak louder than words. Your behaviour will clearly support your outrage at this preventable homicide on the roads. Never drive after drinking!

A Wonderful Experience
Oscar Chow 4D

The baby crocodile that Sammy’s cousin had given him was getting too big to keep in the bathroom. One day, Sammy came home from school and was horrified by what he saw. He saw that his home was in a mess and all of the things were torn apart by something. Sammy suspected that his crocodile might have got hurt, so he rushed to the bathroom; however, he could not find his crocodile. When he left the bathroom, he saw that all his jeans, the bedside lamp and his bed were smashed.

Suddenly he saw a shadow escaping through the window. He dashed to the window and looked down, he saw his crocodile was crawling along the street, and all of the pedestrians were screaming. He rushed down to the street. Unfortunately, a lot of policemen had come a moment ago; they were using a heavy rope to catch his crocodile. He tried to stop the police from catching his crocodile. However, he could not succeed. His crocodile was captured, and he was sad and wanted to go on a strike to get his crocodile back. But the policemen were stubborn and they told him they would take Sammy’s crocodile to a detention centre. Sammy then stole the cage and hid immediately but unluckily, he was found by a policeman. They then took Sammy and his crocodile to the police station. He heard that the police were discussing how to deal with Sammy’s crocodile.

“Let’s kill the crocodile.”
“No, we should send it to the zoo,” they murmured.

Three hours later, they released Sammy but they still kept his crocodile.
Four months later, Sammy received a letter from the police station and it was about how to handle his crocodile. There was an opinion about building a little zoo in Tong Kong Estate. Sammy agreed to this approach. A few days later, they told Sammy that they would spend two millions dollars to build a new zoo.

After a year, the zoo was completely finished. Sammy went there to take a look. However, Sammy could not find the beautiful zoo he had imagined but only a simple one. Sammy thought that it was such a thrifty government, but he was already satisfied because his crocodile had now got a new home.

Because of the new zoo, Tong Kong Estate was never the same again.

Should Students Attend Tutorial Schools?
Chantal Leung 4E

“Should students attend tutorial schools?” This has been a hot topic among teachers, students and parents since tutorial schools appeared in Hong Kong. About 20 years ago, the tutorial schools in Hong Kong were not as prevalent as the ones now. Students would not attend tutorial schools unless they had really bad performance in school. Nowadays, students attend tutorial schools as if it is part of their daily routines. In my opinion, students need not attend tutorial schools.

To begin with, I believe that students learn a good amount of knowledge in school. All schools in Hong Kong have to follow the same syllabus set by the Education Bureau. Actually, tutorial schools are just trying to teach faster than normal schools so that the students will think they are learning extra stuff. However, they are just learning things two to three months earlier than their classmates.

Apart from that, students become more and more dependent on the tutorial schools’ exercises and notes when it comes to dealing with exams. For example, in the past few months, a lot of tutorial schools in Hong Kong promoted themselves as if they were experts of the HKDSE. They claimed that they had prepared a lot of questions which they assumed would appear in the approaching DSE. Whether the tutorial schools had guessed the questions right or not is beside the point. In terms of the pursuit of knowledge, this has already lost the true meaning of learning. Normal schools teach the students knowledge and moral values while tutorial schools only train their students to be one of the exam robots.
I admit that students who attend tutorial schools usually get good grades in exams. However, they only get good grades because they had done so many similar questions in the tutorial schools. Did they really learn a lot there? I doubt it. Most likely, they would have a very difficult time at university or after they left the tutorial schools because there is no one who can help them to predict the exam questions anymore. To me, attending tutorial schools is as addictive as taking drugs. Once you get hooked, you will never be able to get rid of it. You might think that your grades have improved because of attending tutorial schools, but in fact, it is just because you’ve drilled the same type of questions again and again.

Last but surely not least, I reckon that attending tutorial schools is a waste of money and time. The tuition fee is usually very high. Also, it takes you two to three hours to attend the teacher every time. If I were the student, I would rather stay at home and do revision on my own than wasting my time in tutorial schools.

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**On Teenage Dating**

Gloria Au 4E

Dear Editor,

As a regular reader of your column, I am writing to share my views on teenage dating. There is an old saying that goes “Do the right thing at the right time.” As some people argue, teenagers are not mature enough to be dating at a young age. It is believed that they should not fall in love before they turn 18 years old. As a teenager, I disagree with this argument to a large extent.

Undeniably, the number of teenage couples has been on the rise. Some teenage couples are seen behaving inappropriately doing things such as kissing in parks and on public transportation. I admit that kissing in public areas is quite unacceptable. However, they should not take a part for the whole. They should realize that not every teenage couple behaves intimately all the time.

Some parents claim that teenagers are not mature enough to start a relationship. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that teenagers today are more mature than teenagers from back in the days. Teenagers are not cold-blooded. They should be given the right to love or hate, just like adults.

When teenagers cannot express their emotions such as their affection for another person, they may be enmeshed in a state of depression and frustration. Obviously, the consequences of not letting teenagers date are more serious than some adults think.
Furthermore, some people argue that young people should concentrate on their studies instead of wasting their precious time on some teenage romance. However, dating someone is hardly the most detrimental cause of bad academic performance. Surfing the Internet for hours, for example, will also affect a student’s school results. Other hobbies such as reading novels and watching television may also affect one’s performance at school. So does it mean that every student should have their computer broken, their television disconnected, and novels torn? It’s time for some adults to wake up and face the fact that teenage dating issues are all personal, meaning that just because some teenage couples are having problems doesn’t mean that dating is bad for all teenagers.

By and large, having a boyfriend or girlfriend is not necessarily a bad thing. Some teenage couples may become more enthusiastic and positive about their lives when they fall in love. Thus, I believe that it is no use preventing teenagers from starting to date at a young age. What matters is whether adults educate and support them with the right mindset.

Yours faithfully,
Gloria Au

Divine Supremacy
Isaac Tsui 4E

Grayson Chan walked down the boulevards of Paris in the reflected moonlight of the River Seine. His last business deal had made him a very rich man. He smiled to himself, barely able to contain his happiness. In his euphoria however, he had allowed the black Mercedes with blacked out windows to sneak up on him from behind. As he pivoted to face the car, the side windows were rolled down and a voice called to him from within.

“Please get inside the car, Mr. Chan,” the voice said. It was a deep voice, with a strange accent. Definitely not French, unless... Grayson felt his heart sink. He recognized that voice! Grayson shifted sideways gingerly to confirm his suspicions as the fragments of a long forgotten memory drifted together. Grayson remembered that bitter winter night, when he, an exceptionally bright Harvard graduate was hurrying home to escape the howling winds. He almost made it to the doorstep when a hooded figure glided up and held him frozen with his lifeless gaze, stony and unforgiving. It spoke with a stirring baritone, with an accent Grayson could not place, and with a bizarre tone he uttered, “Grayson Chan, you are one of the Gifted Ones. The Lord has long been kind to you. However, should you fail to meet his demands, you shall pay a dear price.”

“Get in the car, Mr. Chan,” The words cut through Grayson’s thoughts like daggers as the side window of the car was rolled down. Grayson could see his stalker now, and his pupils contracted.
The hooded figure from over a decade ago had shed his cloak for a three-piece suit. But no matter how well-dressed he was, Grayson would not concede defeat to his bluffs. He was rich, and he still had one more ace up his sleeve.

“No, thank you,” he replied, his tone icy and hollow, his words clipped and eloquent. “I have no time for this. I have an important client to meet.”

“We know you seek to destroy us, but I assure you that your ‘client’ will not be able to assist you in your endeavors in any useful way.”

“Oh really?” Grayson challenged, arrogance creeping into his voice “You are but a myth! You have no place in a world with such technological prowess! And just let me demonstrate for you,” as a glimmering cloud of cobalt blue materialized on each of his balled up fists. Indeed Grayson’s last “business deal” was in fact a contract signed with the Department of Unconventional Warfare, an upstart branch in the U.S. military. “We have replicated your powers,” he continued, “Today, Man shall rule the world by his own will!” Grayson howled at the top of his lungs as arcs of lightning branched out, shattering streetlamps all over the street. The man in the suit however, was still seated in the car, and none of the rolling chaos seemed to be affecting him. It was as though his austere serenity was forming a force field, an impenetrable barrier between himself and the pure evil beyond. And eventually, it did. The soft, glowing curtain of light that was the manifest of his divine might absorbed the blue aura, devouring it hungrily as it advanced towards Grayson’s position.

Grayson lay on the cold pavement, frozen, eyes wide open with disbelief and speechlessness. The man in the suit stood before him, as blood trickled along the cracks between the paving stones. The man leaned forward, surveying the young businessman curled up on the ground. After what seemed like both an eternity and a mere instant, the voice that had so haunted Grayson in his worst nightmare spoke again, proclaiming his death sentence “Your time is up, you shall have to pay the

price,” Grayson mustered every ounce of energy in his body to form his last words, “But who is the Lord? What are his demands?”

The man in the suit cast a strange look onto Grayson, as if he were speaking in some foreign tongue. He knelt before Grayson, the ice in his voice thawing, as the melodic baritone echoed throughout the empty streets of night.

“My child, the Lord lives within each of us.”

Grayson understood, as realization hit home. Grayson gazed mesmerized at the flickering streetlight above. “But it’s too late…” he murmured.

“It’s never too late.”

Grayson gave the slightest of nods, and with that, the streetlight gave out its last light, plunging the entire street into darkness.
Dear Editor,

The recent proposal of implementing National Education in Hong Kong schools has ignited a controversial debate among people from all walks of life in Hong Kong. As a secondary school student, I am strongly opposed to the implementation of the National Education for a number of reasons.

Undeniably, the curriculum guideline contains a lot of information about China, including elements such as its history, geographical background and important historical figures. By learning about these, students’ knowledge about China will likely be boosted.

However, the information presented in the curriculum guideline is biased. The unscrupulous guideline is full of information that glorifies the Chinese Communist Party and the former state leader, Zedong Mao. It also plays down the numerous scandals and mishaps that were caused by the Chinese government. In addition, the curriculum guideline does not describe the whole picture of China’s history. For instance, other political parties such as the Kuomintang (the Nationalist Party) are not mentioned in the guideline.

A good teaching guideline for National Education should consist of both positive and negative facts about the country, so that students can form their own opinions in a fair manner. Yet, a biased curriculum guideline which blindly encourages or even forces students to be enthusiastic about their country will only discourage students from thinking critically about the affairs of their country.

The fact that the government is planning to implement National Education in primary schools is also alarming. Since most, if not all, primary school students are still very young and not mature enough to have critical thinking skills, they will easily be influenced by the biased contents of the curriculum and thus will be confronted with the possibility of being brainwashed.

Lastly, the curriculum guideline is not suitable for all Hong Kong students. As Hong Kong is a multi-national city, it does not make sense for schools to require students from non-Chinese backgrounds to demonstrate strong passion towards China. If these students are asked to study the subject, it may lead to serious tension between parents and schools.

I believe that the fears mentioned in this letter are shared by many people in Hong Kong who are aware of the possible consequences of forcefully implementing National Education. Scrapping the subject altogether will be the most optimal solution to eliminating the conflicts among different stakeholders.

Yours faithfully,

Kathy Chin
Should We Go on Field Trips instead of Having Lessons?

Charles Leung 4F

As an old Chinese saying goes, “Reading ten thousand books is not as useful as traveling ten thousand miles.” I absolutely agree with it. Learning while touring around is much more effective than simply sitting in the classroom and listening. Some parents are urging our school to organize more local field trips to replace some of the lessons. I support their views and I am going to express my opinions in this article.

Parents mentioned that having more local field trips organized would let students have more exposure to different types of knowledge. For example, visiting Hong Kong Museum of History can provide students not only with loads of historical photos and information, but also real figures and statues. These are excellent teaching materials we can never find in a History textbook. If students take part in organizing field trips, their leadership skills, patience and the ability to cooperate with others can be trained. In Geography field trips, students may have chances to be enclosed by the beautiful nature, thus it is easier for them to accept the thought that to protect the environment and the endangered species is their responsibility.

Based on some research, learning from firsthand information is far more effective than from the textbooks. Let me explain this by an example. If a student picks up a stone with black minerals embedded in it, after knowing that they are mica and hornblende, they can immediately picture the stone inside the brain. Whenever they hear the word “mica”, they are able to recall its picture in their memory. As Albert Einstein has once put it, “If I can’t picture it, I can’t understand it.” Holding a piece of sample in your hands is a hundred times better than reading the description of the mineral. The importance of experience cannot be left out.

Objectors may state that having field trips instead of lessons will waste a lot of time, hindering the teaching progress. Time is wasted in transportation. Teachers’ burden will be increased. However, I disagree to their perspective. Local field trips cover many crucial parts in textbooks. As I have explained in the previous paragraphs, learning from experience may lead to a significantly improved academic result. With the knowledge deeply implanted, the demand for quizzes and tests decreases, thus time is saved and the teachers’ responsibility will not go up. Moreover, teachers can have more chances to get close with students and understand them more. A better relationship between teachers and students is beneficial for different stakeholders in education.

Considering the above points, it is crystal clear that the advantages of replacing some lessons with local field trips outweigh the disadvantages. Here I am urging our school to organize field trips as soon as possible, without any hesitation. It is time to change the teaching method into a more innovative and interesting one. Finding the most effective way of teaching is always the first priority, right?
Beauty is in the Eyes of the Audience
Charles Leung 4F

Nowadays, the most convenient way for us to keep connecting with the changing world is by watching or listening to the news programmes on the television or radio. News anchors are responsible for presenting the news, and many people agree that having a glamorous look is a basic requirement for being a news anchor. I have the same thought that ugly people can hardly be a news anchor. I am going to further explain my view in this article.

Being a news anchor is an extremely high-profile job. Every day they are facing thousands of audience members. We all agree that people prefer the good rather than the bad. They have to be pretty or handsome in order to attract people, as they are the representatives of their TV stations. Moreover, senior news anchors often interact with politicians and celebrities. Based on some research, having a good look has a positive effect on a person and his self-esteem increases. Being confident is crucial when facing famous people. For example, anchors like Erin Burnett (CNBC), Marc Cox (Channel 4), Melissa Theuriau (LC1) are all charming people.

Secondly, attractive-looking people are more able to get a job than others. Take choosing a secretary as an example. No boss would like to have an ugly person to be his/her secretary. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, news anchors have a prominent profile. TV station bosses are the audience members who would not like to look at an ugly person when they turn on the TV. Therefore, I can state that the look of a news anchor is extremely important.

Opposers may argue that an ugly person can still be a news anchor of a radio station. I would answer, yes, but with a low chance. I am going to explain below.

People think that they can only listen to one's voice on the radio. It was true before but for now it is not true since digital audio broadcasting is becoming more and more popular. A photo of the news anchor may appear during the news section. Also, with their names broadcast, they have as prominent profiles as other DJs and TV news anchors. Radio news anchors may have to contact politicians and celebrities. Their images are the same as that of the TV news anchors.

In conclusion, the most important part of a news anchor, besides the language skills, is the image. One must be able to attract others and make the audience think that they are professional. The easiest way to achieve that is using their gorgeous appearance because they are public figures. I would not say that an ugly person can definitely not be a news anchor, but the chance of succeeding is very slim.
News Quality Comes before Beauty

Jenny Pang 4F

News is a part of everyday life. Besides reading newspapers to know about news, we can also watch news reports on television to know what is happening around us. A news anchor is the person who presents news in those broadcasted programs. They have a crucial role to play. Some people say that an ugly person cannot be a news anchor, but I am totally against this notion.

People may suggest that an ugly news anchor would lower viewers’ interest in the news, because the news reports on television would become awful to watch. Therefore, people think an ugly news anchor would seriously affect the quality of the news reports. However, this opinion is absolutely biased and disrespectful.

In my opinion, people watch news broadcast because they are interested in the news itself, but not the news anchor. If they want to look at attractive faces, they can probably watch some other entertaining programs with celebrities. It is not really necessary to watch the news. If one really cares about news, he or she will not care if the news anchor looks good or not; but if one cannot care less about news, he or she will not even stay tuned no matter how pretty the news anchor is.

As for affecting the news quality, it is not definite. The most essential quality of a news anchor is his or her professionalism, but not their looks. To be a competent news anchor, one should speak fluently and clearly in front of cameras, because a news anchor’s job is to present explicit information of the news of the day to the audience. A news anchor who stammers in front of cameras is under qualified even if he or she looks stunning, for he or she has already failed to convey a clear message to the audience, and that is what really affects the interest of the audience. Therefore, as long as the news anchor can report the news with certain professionalism, it does not matter if he or she is ugly or not.

In conclusion, being good-looking is not a necessary requirement of being a news anchor, so an ugly person can actually be a news anchor like anybody else as long as he or she has the ability. We should not judge one’s ability by how he or she looks like for this is so not fair. Everybody deserves a chance no matter how physically attractive or unattractive they are..
Should Schools Offer Cash Bonuses for Good

Academic Results?

Kelvin Poon 4F

“Should schools offer cash bonuses for good academic results?” This has long been a hotly debated topic. Nowadays, Hong Kong schools are fiercely competitive. In order to enroll in a good secondary school or university, students must work very hard. In my opinion, schools should give out scholarships for good academic results.

First of all, rewarding those who get high marks in exams is the best way to encourage other students to do the same. They would try to imitate the high-achievers by studying hard and paying more attention in class. Some people may argue that schools do not know how much money would be enough to motivate a student. Nevertheless, I think the amount of the bonuses is not so important. What the focus needs to be is on letting students know they will be rewarded after striving hard.

Some people say that many kids nowadays receive pocket money from their parents. Getting cash from their schools is unlikely to be a big deal in their eyes. I completely disagree with this. To my mind, students normally have no way to earn money, and some may have very little or even no pocket money. If they receive cash bonuses, they can buy things they could not afford with their tiny savings. Moreover, for the families that are facing financial problems, offering scholarships may help to alleviate their burden.

What’s more, handing out cash is the most practical way to reward students. No one can deny that providing cash may send a wrong message to students that the purpose of studying is to earn money. Some people suggest giving out book coupons or stationery instead. However, I believe that money is the most suitable prize because it allows students to buy what they want, instead of giving them something they may not like. For those students who have long-term education plans, they can even save the money for future use.

As a conclusion, offering cash bonuses can no doubt help those families facing financial problems. Also, rewarding cash is the most practical way to encourage students to work harder so schools should give out cash bonuses for good academic results.
Should Schools Offer Cash Bonuses for Good Academic Results?

Seki Leung 4F

In this age, many schools around the world offer scholarships to students and this phenomenon has given rise to many problems. Should scholarships be awarded to students who have good academic results? Should scholarships be cash bonuses? From my point of view, scholarships should be rewarded for outstanding performances but it should not be cash bonuses.

To begin with, what is scholarship? Scholarship is a kind of financial support for students to learn better and further their education. That is why scholarships should be offered for good academic results as they can motivate students to try their best at school. If schools award those who get high marks, other students will strive for the reward also so it is the best way to encourage students to study hard. And this is the very purpose of giving out scholarships – motivating students to learn.

On the other hand, why should scholarships not be cash bonuses?

Some people say that a cash bonus is the most appealing prize so it is far more effective than offering book coupons or stationery. However, I completely disagree with this.

Nowadays, many young people receive a large amount of pocket money from their parents. Little cash bonuses are simply not a big deal in these children’s eyes thus offering cash cannot motivate students to strive for excellence at school.

Besides, schools may send a wrong moral message to students if they offer cash bonuses. The students may believe that money is everything and soon become money-minded and materialistic. This is not good for the students’ future because they will miss other invaluable aspects of life, such as friendship, family and love to name but a few.

Last but not least, scholarships are a kind of encouragement. Their purpose is to create an atmosphere and environment for students to eagerly pursue knowledge. No doubt, offering cash bonuses violates the purpose of offering scholarships. Learning is for the sake of our own future, not merely financial gain.

To sum up, it is a wise decision to offer scholarships for good academic results, but not cash bonuses.
My Encounter with an Alien
Seki Leung 4F

Have you ever met an alien? Well I did, yesterday morning on the way to school. There I was sitting on the bus when I saw something weird getting on the bus.

I could not believe it! Is it true? I rubbed my eyes and I was sure that a curious-looking creature had got on the bus. It was quite short, with a big round head, two boneless arms and no feet but a tail, which made it look like a snail. To look closer, I found that there were three eyes on its round head and one of them resembled a camera. I was so astonished that my jaw dropped in shock. I had never seen anything like that before. However, the most shocking thing was not that eccentric creature, it was that no one else seemed to be terrified.

“Am I crazy?” I asked myself.

“I’m not dreaming,” I said as I slapped myself on the face.

Being a member of the school’s Supernatural Club, I was more excited than scared. Although I did not know why I could see it, I believed that it had spread some electric waves that made itself transparent. I decided not to do anything first so I just sat behind it to watch the scenery outside the windows as if I could not see the alien. I found that it was also looking at the scenery and its camera-looking eye kept taking photos.

When it got off the bus, I followed it immediately and grabbed its hands. It seemed that the alien was even more dumbfounded than I was.

“Why can you see me?” it asked with a shaking voice.

“I don’t know, maybe it’s because I believe that aliens exist.”

“You won’t hurt me, will you?”

“Of course not! I’m a member of the Supernatural Club. I am just wondering why you’re here!”

“I was a journalist for Space Magazine. I’m now looking for some backward planets that are good for travelling and I think Planet Earth is a marvelous place. The people are kind and the air is fresh...”

“Wait a minute, is Earth really that backward?” I interrupted.

“Yes, most of the other planets in Space don’t use cars anymore. We started to use spaceships about 100,000 years ago!” the alien explained.

“Ok, can you tell me more about outer space?”

After talking for about an hour, I suddenly remembered that I had to go to school. When I was just about to say goodbye, I felt so dizzy and sleepy that I dozed off on the street.

“Hey! Wake up, little boy! This is the terminus,” the bus driver was shaking my shoulders.

“Was it a dream?” I thought as I was not sure.

This morning when I got downstairs, I found a magazine called Space Magazine with the title The Best Planet to Visit – Earth on the floor.
A Party Animal – My Neighbour
Louise Mak 5A

I would like to tell you a story, a real story which took place years ago. I was just a primary four student at that time. After this incident, we moved away. No one talked about it again, even my mother, the most light-hearted and talkative person in my family. After I grew up, I started to understand more about what had happened.

Many years ago, one day after school, when I was waiting for my mum to open the door, I saw many people moving furniture into the flat next to my home. My neighbour was moving in. He introduced himself as a banker. He had many friends. He always invited them to his home. I saw different people every time. They always held parties or had barbecue dinners on his balcony at night. The strange thing was that his friends always left at 12 midnight. All music and noise stopped at that time.

One day, I could not hold my curiosity anymore so I asked him, “Why do all your friends leave at 12 a.m. every night?”

He was shocked to hear my question and slowly, he looked down at me and answered with a smile, “If you really want to know why, come and join us tonight. I will tell you then.”

“I will ask Mummy tonight,” I replied excitedly. But my mum said I was just a primary school girl. I should not stay up late at night and play with adults. I was very disappointed when I heard her answer. And I never talked to my neighbour again.

After that, I had not seen my neighbour for some time. A few weeks later, some police came. They broke into the flat and took away boxes of things. Through the transparent plastic bags in the policemen’s hands, I saw some animal bones. “Why are they taking the left overs of the barbecue dinner with them?” I wondered. Then, the police interviewed everyone living in the neighbourhood, including me, a primary four girl. Some of the strangest questions they asked were if he had given us any food, like stewed meat or meat broth and if we had smelt any foul stench coming from his apartment. After answering all their questions, my mum asked the police what had happened. But my mum did not allow me to listen. I only remembered that that night mum and dad talked until dawn broke. And soon, we moved away. All along, they did not tell me why we had left so suddenly.

After I grew up, I recalled bits and pieces of some strange encounters we had with this man. Sometimes, after his late night parties with his friends, he would ask me in the morning, “Little girl, did you hear people screaming last night?” I always said no. I did hear some screaming the night before. And sometimes, he would take some broth to us, but my mum always asked him to keep it for himself because he looked so skinny and tired. My mum thought he should eat more.

Now, I know where the bones came from. I know why his “friends” always “left” at 12 a.m. I know why he asked me such strange questions. Now, all the mysteries surrounding this event have been solved.

My previous neighbour was a cannibalistic serial killer.
Persistence is the Key
Ashley Pang 5B

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. No matter who you are, you must have your dreams, your ambitions. Have you ever thought about what the most important element to achieving your ambitions is? Maybe you will say a good relationship is indispensable for achieving any ambition. Some of you may think that if you don’t have an abundant capital or a satisfactory education background, you will never succeed. Of course, these elements provide a springboard for pursuing your ambition. However, I believe there is a key to achieving your ambition, and that is persistence.

Inevitably, we will encounter a lot of obstacles when we try to achieve our dreams. What will you do if there is a difficulty which makes you depressed? Will you try to defeat it or will you choose to give up? “An iron pestle can be ground down to a needle.” There are numerous examples from history that can prove the validity of this idiom from ancient China. Florence Nightingale, the famous and beloved nurse, encountered great difficulties when she was achieving her ambition. She had an aspiration to become a nurse, but in those days, nursing was a humble and menial job. Florence Nightingale came from an upper-class British family, therefore, her mother strongly opposed to her aspiration. However, she didn’t give up despite her family’s obstruction. On the contrary, she insisted on being a nurse and serving the sick and the deprived. She forsook the comforts and wealth to become a humble nurse. She served the wounded soldiers in hospital during the Crimean war. Although the environment was abominable, she stayed there and devoted herself to serving her patients. When everyone fell asleep at night, she carried a lamp and looked after the soldiers. That’s why she was also called “The Lady with the Lamp”. To face these difficulties, she hadn’t grumbled and given up halfway, she chose to persist. Because of her persistence, she reached her ambition; she became a symbol of nursing, and changed the misunderstanding among people. Had she given up her dream, the social status of nurses wouldn’t have improved to today’s high regard for the profession.

Persistence is failing nineteen times and succeeding at the twentieth. You may doubt if this idiom is true, but Sun Yat Sen is a perfect example of this idiom. Sun Yat Sen, the father of Modern China, had met a lot of obstacles when he was organizing the revolution. He perceived the rottenness of the Qing Dynasty government, so he made a decision to overthrow this corrupt administration. He established the league, recruited new members who had the same aspirations, and preached the idea of revolution to the public. We can imagine how tough that work was. It was very difficult to get the support of the people, worse still, he was struck by the government of the Qing Dynasty. The league had launched revolutions many times. Unfortunately, they had failed for ten times. Did Sun Yat Sen give up? No, he didn’t. After ten failures, they succeeded at the eleventh attempt. They overthrew the Qing government and led China to democracy. Sun Yat Sen is an ideal illustration of persistence. Yes, persistence is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.

You may now think that Florence Nightingale and Sun Yat Sen are so far from us. Let’s look at the controversial issue around us. The Hong Kong government tried to implement National Education in the local curriculum, and this policy has caused much debate in our society. Many people thought it was a brainwashing subject for students, therefore, the implementation of National Education was resisted by the public. At that moment, a form 4 student, Wong Tse Fung came out and led the students to resist. His behavior raised the awareness of many local people, who started to join the resistance, had hunger strikes and class boycotts to express their resolution. These actions caused a tension between the government and the public. The organizations which opposed the policy firmly insisted on their standpoints and actions to strive for success. They believed if they insisted, the government would cancel the implementation of National Education. The result proved the success of their persistence. The government promised that the National Education would not be implemented at this moment. Therefore, we can see that persistence is an avenue to success.

Ladies and gentlemen, although we are not tycoons, we are not celebrities, we are not geniuses, I believe that as long as we persist, we can overcome the difficulties, we can taste the fruits of success, we can attain our ambitions! Remember, steady efforts can work miracles, never say give up when you are trying to achieve your ambition, thank you!
Determination is What You Need

Joey Li 5B

Ladies and gentlemen, have you ever thought of how you can achieve your ambitions? Is food for thought for all people in this era. Did you strive for your ambition with gritty determination? Did you ever get lost? Perhaps, indeed, we should think about it and what it means in our lives.

Lao Tzu said, “A journey for a thousand miles starts with a single step.” There are a lot of examples from history that can prove the validity of this quote, but it’s not enough for only one step, you need gritty determination in order to prepare for a long run.

Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a dead-end wall, don’t turn around and throw in the towel. Try to figure out the problems, go through them. Some of you must have heard of the stories of Lance Armstrong. He is a professional road-racing cyclist of great renown in the world. He got the world champions for seven times in his heyday. Unfortunately, he had testicular cancer with a tumor and it spread to his brain and lungs quickly. He needed to have cancer treatments and surgery. The doctor stated that he had less than a 40% survival chance. Based on his dream — cycling, he decided to have the surgery. “Why should you be the person who operates on my head?” Armstrong asked the doctor. “Because I am as good as you are at cycling,” the doctor replied. Armstrong’s last treatment was received on December 13, 1996. He has grappled with testicular cancer. Albeit he had to face the cancer, he always believed in himself. He saved his cycling career and emerged from the cancer. His determination made him come back after a few years no matter how long he had been in the doldrums. He recovered with his gritty determination. That’s why we need to believe in ourselves. No matter how tough the circumstance are, be determined!

I don’t think anything is unrealistic if you believe you can do it. If you are determined enough, you can get it done. Never underestimate the strength of your determination.

It has been said that “Enclose your heart in times of need with steel of your determination. In doing this, all things will be bearable.” To Armstrong, his winning was not only a feat, but an inspiration for high-flyers who want to pursue their dreams, to attain their ambitions, a proof for the ability of the impaired and a model for normal people to emulate. I’m convinced that there is no better illustration than the life of Armstrong.

The fact is that you begin to become successful the minute you are determined to be. Most people succeed because they are determined to. If you ask whether determination is the key to success, it will be a definite yes!

Thank you.
Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Do you believe every one of us has the same ability to achieve our ambitions? Or have you ever started to achieve yours? If your answer is negative, it is time for you to attain your own goal now. I am not joking; I am in earnest. As a human being, if you stop dreaming, you’re just sleeping.

Some may ask what the first step is to achieving our ambitions. I would answer that the first step is to take your first step, and then go step by step. That means if you have a great ambition, you should try to fulfill it as soon as possible. Don’t disregard it. Don’t wait until the situation is perfect.

Successful people share the same characteristic – they are always enthusiastic people. They are ready for anything. They just try to take the first step whether it makes them successful or not. “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” said an ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu. On the other hand, Martin Luther King said, “You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.” If you combine the two quotations, you can create a successful ambition that begins with the single first step. That’s why taking the first step is perhaps the most difficult thing to do in achieving an ambition. I think that is what stops most people indeed. That little first step can already separate the successful from the unsuccessful. Without that first step you are doomed to miss your goal.

Let’s imagine the common situations in our daily lives. If you want to lose weight, you may first change your eating habits. That’s what I say – the first step. The kilogram will never disappear if you don’t take this little first step. Similarly, if you want to become wealthy, you should first work hard for your job. It’ll never happen overnight unless you win the lottery and we know that it rarely happens. Therefore, what you need to do is to take your first step and then step by step.

Here I will explain with one more example. I believe every one of us here has heard of the famed quotation, “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.” from Neil Alden Armstrong. In July 20, 1969, Neil became the first human to land and walk on the moon. You see, because of his first step, humans can eventually achieve the great ambition of setting foot on the moon. This is undoubtedly the most powerful and amazing example to prove that the first step to achieve our ambitions is to make that initial move.

William Shakespeare said, “Dream in light years, challenge miles, walk step by step.” If you have a great ambition, just take the first step to strive for it. The step may only be a tiny one, but trust that it may be the most important action for what you can do now. Don’t focus on how long the process will take, focus on taking the first step. Without it, no progress can be made. Yesterday is today’s memory, and tomorrow is today’s dream. So, the best time to start achieving your ambition is right now!

Thank you.
Having gone through one century, our school has been a really successful one that has nurtured numerous outstanding students. Many become reputable celebrities or movers and shakers in the political or business sector, while some others try their best to contribute to society. With such successful fruits, the hard work of our gardeners – teachers, should not be forgotten. Our brilliant Chinese History teacher, Mrs. Young, is always students’ favourite teacher and has impacted a lot of the students in her teaching career. Not only does she indoctrinate students with knowledge, but she also takes care of us as if we were her own children. To us, her guidance, love and care are what deserve our deepest gratitude.

Being professional in their teaching subject and having passion in teaching are the prerequisites of a good teacher. Mrs. Young definitely possesses both these qualities. Teaching Chinese History, which is usually perceived to be a boring and dull subject, in an interesting way is no doubt a difficult job. Despite the fact that many students loathe the subject, Mrs. Young tries her utmost to make the lessons as enjoyable as possible by explaining things with her dramatic voice and telling us about funny events that have happened in history. We are fascinated by her lessons. Besides, in order to equip students for the coming HKDSE, Mrs. Young often spends a lot of time teaching us impeccable examination skills in writing good essays. Even though she is a busy teacher, she is always glad to mark our essays conscientiously and leave comments on how we can improve our work.

On the path of studying, students always need adequate encouragement and appreciation. Mrs. Young is always willing to offer her genuine support to us. Whenever we achieve good results in assessment or have even the slightest improvement, she treats us with chocolate and sweets. A lot of the students must have experienced a time when they were frustrated about their studies and Mrs. Young would always pass by at the right time, giving them her support in different ways. A hug is always the most powerful support from Mrs. Young as we really feel so warm and her unwavering support always drives us to go forward.

Besides being students’ teacher, Mrs. Young is actually everybody’s mother at school. She always shares her personal experience with us and teaches us her principles of life. Once when she taught us about Taoism, she shared the story about her daughter who suffered from an innate disease and had gone through hardship in childhood. Through taking care of her daughter, she realised that a human’s strength is limited and what we could do is to be harmonious with nature. This experience gave her the ability to view her life in a different perspective and not to complain about being hapless. Moreover, being a Chinese History teacher, Mrs. Young loves the nation very much. Last year, she spent a whole lesson explaining the June Fourth Incident. She also distributed an article she wrote in the 20th anniversary of that incident. The article was sentimentally written about her grievance and worries about the future development of her nation. That was without a doubt the best national education students had ever had. Our kind and patriotic ‘mother’ has shown us we should learn to take an interest in the development of China and give opinions constructively.

It is really lucky that our school has such a good teacher, a teacher who can really inspire students in different ways and is the role model of students. She treats her job as a mission to nurture the next generation. With her presence, students’ growth becomes fruitful and meaningful.
Respect for Property Rights

Yannie Pang 5B

Controversy is raging over the issue of downloading films and music from the Internet by adolescents, as it is obvious that examples of Internet downloading are ubiquitous. Just go to any forum and you will see that teenagers can easily find the sources of hot music and films that are readily available for downloading. Should this trend be encouraged? I am going to state the arguments for and against this phenomenon.

Some people advocate that such downloading can cause positive impacts on adolescents when it is done for academic purposes. They claim that the action of Internet downloading is for the sake of some free learning resources. The world is entering an era of multi-media. Instead of the conventional chalk and board, learning through music and videos is becoming more popular. If the Internet provides such a huge amount of useful learning resources, why not let adolescents download them freely in order to help them obtain a good grade and widen their horizons at the same time?

The financial limitation of teenagers is also a reason why downloading files from the Internet is reasonable. Just think of how much they receive each week from their parents – a mere hundred dollars is definitely an insufficient amount for buying all their favourite CDs and DVDs. As the Internet now plays the role of a library, teens can get whatever resources they like for free. The only difference is you need to return what you have borrowed from the library, but you can own what you got from the Internet for a long period. We cannot deny the fact that Internet downloading can surely ease the financial pressure of teenagers, which can help them to follow trends and for entertainment after their studies.

As mentioned above, Internet downloading may be convenient and seen by many as good for teenagers, but does it therefore make it tolerable for one to show no respect for property rights? My answer is a definite no.

Chances are that this action will make both the music and film industries suffer. Every single piece of artwork involves time and effort that is beyond our imagination. The intellectual properties of the creators should be well protected, as they deserve. If everyone can easily get a free copy of their hard work without their permission, they cannot earn enough money to make a living, which will certainly create a vicious circle. No one will try hard to create terrific productions, as they cannot be repaid. It will be miserable to see the music and film industries destroyed because of illegal downloading, which is undoubtedly a selfish act.

What is more, some wrong concepts will be instilled in adolescents. They may get used to downloading whatever they want since everything comes is so handy. However, they may learn to neglect the fact that what they are doing is illegal and immoral. It is not only infringing the copyright laws, but also hampering the creativity of music and films. There is basically no difference between illegal downloading and theft. If teens could not distinguish the right way to receive information from the wrong one, they may just grow accustomed to stealing others’ fruits when they grow up, and may be punished by the law as a result. Therefore, giving them the right concept in mind is of utmost importance.

Provided with the factors outlined above, we may conclude that downloading of films and music from the Internet by adolescents should not be encouraged. It will bring these industries adverse effects and bring harm to their growth, even if the original purpose of this unethical act may have been positive.
Walking Alone in the Dark
Cynthia Lau 5C

Sally Han was a frightened woman. He was following her again. Why? Who was he? She turned round nervously. There was no one there and she started walking quickly down the dark street. Each tree she passed, she feared he would jump out at her. Her walking became faster; and her breathing became very rapid. In the distance she could see the welcoming doors of the hotel entrance. She started running. Suddenly a huge shadow leapt out from behind a parked car and blocked her way. She was so frightened she couldn’t scream. All she could do was whisper in terror.

“What... what do you want?” she gasped with fear. The man smiled at her. It seemed a wicked smile. Sally suddenly lost her breath, trembled and fell almost fainting. Many thoughts flashed vividly through Sally’s mind. Maybe she had been watching too many TV programs and thought of different eventualities. The more she thought, the more frightened she became and wished to dash back to the hotel as fast as she could. The fact was that her way was blocked and could go nowhere.

At last she regained her breath and asked, “I am Sally, what do you want? I can give you all my belongings but the total value isn’t much.” The man looked surprised and yelled, “I don’t care who you are, just give me all your belongings.” Sally sighed with a relief and said, “So it was only a robbery.” “See how co-operative you are,” the man shouted. In his voice you could also feel his impatience.

“Hurry up, follow my instructions! Do not hesitate! I am sure you still want your life,” screamed the man. Upon the urging of the man, Sally removed all her belongings and gave them to the man. There were a ring, a bracelet and a small amount of cash. The man did not seem to be satisfied and asked impatiently, “Is that all?” Sally stared at the man courageously and answered, “I have told you already that I don’t have much.” She dared to say that thinking that the man was a novice but obviously she was wrong. “Do you still care about your life?” the man seemed to be annoyed and decided to harm Sally. She could also sense the change of atmosphere and was also under the impression that the man might hurt her. She wanted to run away but she found herself totally stricken with fear and frozen in one spot. Both Sally and the man did not say a word.

Suddenly a strange but relieving voice broke the dead silence, “Anything I can do to help?” asked a security guard rushing to the scene from the hotel. The mugger, surprised by the guard, ran away. He disappeared into the darkness quickly and was barely visible for anyone to catch him. At that very moment Sally became speechless. When she regained her words, Sally burst into dumbfounded tears and exclaimed, “Thank you for having arrived in time. Never in my life have I experienced such a terrifying moment. I almost lost my life.” Afterwards, when Sally spoke of the case, she always regretted, “If I had not walked into the darkness alone, I would not have been ambushed.”
Working Hand In Hand to Combat Domestic Violence

Luby Lam SC

A survey indicated that there is an increasing trend of domestic violence in Hong Kong nowadays. It has raised the public’s concern over the gravity of domestic violence. In a bid to combat and ultimately eradicate domestic violence, the government and the public should work hand in hand to fight against this crippling problem.

First and foremost, why do some men use violence against their partners? If we investigate it, it is not hard to find that stress and strain on men could be one of the reasons. Nowadays, many men are under enormous work-related pressure. They may have been scolded by their employers in their office. Also, they may have to work in their office round the clock. These are the factors which make them feel angry, anxious, tired, or even depressed. Their anger will accumulate since they will not express their negative emotion to their boss. Eventually, being abusive is the only way for them to vent their anger. If their partners do something that displeases them, those men may vent their indignation on them. Women, thus, have become the innocent victims of those stress-ridden men. Moreover, male chauvinism may also make men act violently.

Secondly, being afraid of divorce, most women choose to stay in an abusive relationship with their violent husbands. This may ‘encourage’ the men to keep using violent means against their wives. In many cases, it is dangerous for a woman to leave her abuser. Leaving him can cause additional problems for the woman. For instance, she may lose child custody and financial support, as many female sufferers are not financially independent.

Some measures should be taken in order to curb domestic violence. First of all, educating the public is important. Distorted social beliefs should first be amended. Some victims have a misconception that they should not report the abuse to the police or seek assistance from social workers. Furthermore, the government should hold more talks about how to combat domestic violence. Apart from that, the government and the police should set up a hotline for the victims of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a complex and multifaceted issue. It is believed that with concerted endeavors, the government and the public can combat domestic violence effectively. Social workers’ assistance to the families in need should be of top priority before it is too late.
Healthy Food for Thought
Aishlyn Wong SD

The quick evolution of the Internet has been followed by the issue of free downloading of films and music from the Internet. While we are enjoying the convenience of the Internet, much bitter controversy has been stirred up in the public. Everyone has his or her different response to the issue. Is it illegal? Or is it acceptable?

One may argue on the basis that free downloading is a more economical and convenient way to gain entertainment. As most adolescents are students or junior staff, they do not have much spare money to spend on entertainment. Since DVDs and VCDS are relatively costly to teenagers who may not be able to afford them, downloading films and music from the Internet can enable them to save money while entertaining themselves.

Also, whether in school or the office, adolescents are often so busy that they may not have enough time to go to buy them. The Internet thus becomes a blessing for them, as they can get what they want from the Internet readily with just one simple click.

On the other hand, some people advocate that it is illegal and therefore claim that free downloading is an act of theft and shows a lack of respect for originality. And it also deprives the creators of his or her income, so they may lose their motivation to publish their works. As is known to all, most of these free films and music are uploaded without the permission of the creators.

Moreover, convenient as it may seem, it is by no means just a blessing in disguise, since free movies and music are easily accessible, indecent materials, like pornography and violence, can also be one click away. Worse still, some may even attempt to hack into others’ computers by embedding viruses into those films and music. If adolescents unfortunately get those files, the problems that will be brought to them will be unimaginable.

In short, while some say that free downloading is economical and convenient in terms of entertainment, some insist that it is illegal and will discourage the creators. In my opinion, although the notion of accessing the latest films and music for free is enticing, doesn’t seem to be selfish? Is it convincing enough to make free downloading acceptable? These questions do give us healthy food for thought.
A Question Beyond Dispute

Bella Liu SD

When asked the question whether they have ever downloaded films and music from the Internet, most adolescents will nod their heads since examples of such illegal downloading of files are ubiquitous. In recent years, the prevalence of illegal downloading among adolescents has stirred up much controversy.

To commence with, adolescents download music and films from the Internet for financial reasons. Illegal downloading, which is synonymous with free downloading, is an irresistible magnet for youngsters who do not have any income except the pocket money from their parents. In light of the impact of inflation, CDs and DVDs are so expensive that students can by no means afford. As a matter of fact, it is tolerable that adolescents may resort to illegal downloading in place of purchases.

Not only is illegal downloading attractive to the downloaders, but it also benefits the creators. Illegal downloading makes the creators’ work highly accessible, hence functioning as a tool for promotion and advertisement at zero cost. As is known to all, the Internet is an enormous socializing platform due to its convenience and openness. In fact, it is estimated that a billion songs are illegally downloaded per day, with about 100 copies over a legal track. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that those compositions can be shared in seconds. As a result, downloading films and music from the Internet appears to benefit the creator as well.

Provided with the factors outlined above, we may conclude that downloading films and music from the Internet does bring some advantages to both the creators and downloaders. However, as the old saying goes, every sword has the blades. While zealously and frequently indulge in illegal downloading, adolescents should also consider its downsides.

Granted, downloading songs and films for free serves as an implement of promotion. However, meanwhile, it deprives the creators of their income and stops them from launching a new piece of work. One may argue on the basis that every song and film is a masterpiece of its creator and that is drains the creator’s effort and time. As illegal downloading allows one to obtain their work without paying, hardly can the creators get any remuneration in spite of their endeavors.

Apart from the significant financial loss, there is a more subtle aspect to consider when it comes to the proliferation of illegal downloading. Taking information or sharing music from unregistered websites means stealing others’ possession, thus breaking the law. As a matter of fact, illegal downloading, which takes place in the virtual Internet, has no difference from shoplifting, which happens in real shops, as both actions are meant to take away others’ belongings without permission. Once illegal downloading is regarded as an acceptable activity, adolescents will be encouraged to steal. What’s worse, the Internet will then become a hotbed for crimes, causing a huge chaos in our society.

All in all, while illegal downloading has its own drawbacks, it does bring us some unique conveniences and can help boost the reputation of the creator. In a generation where the Internet is indispensable, it is believed that the wave of illegal downloading will keep growing. Does it therefore make it unacceptable for one to download songs and films on the Internet? It is my conviction that this question can be barely beyond dispute.
Achieving Your Dreams

Joanne Hui SD

Good afternoon, my dear Pui Ching fellow students. It is my pleasure to stand here and give a talk to you all, the future pillars of the society. Seeing that most of you are senior form students, I would like to share with you something related to your future life. Indeed, today I would like to talk about how to achieve your ambitions.

Do you have any dreams? I do believe that everyone has a dream. You may dream of becoming an inventor, while your neighbour might dream of becoming an astronaut. Some of you may worry that it is difficult, if not impossible to make your dreams come true. After all, everyone’s life, ours included, is limited. Nevertheless, having dreams is the cornerstone of achieving our ambitions, which may lead to future success. The story of Thomas Edison can be taken as an example. At that time, there was no light at night so people used candles to illuminate, which resulted in many fire-related tragedies that jeopardized lives. Edison thus dreamt of creating safer light so people wouldn’t be put into danger when using it. Despite numerous failures, he persisted with his experiments and at the end, as you all well know, he succeeded in inventing light bulbs. The story inspires us that having dreams is of utmost significance in achieving success, as it is the necessary motivation. Here, let me share with you my own experience.

When I was small, I dreamt of being a gymnast, so I asked my mother to bring me to the gymnastic center, in which I spent 15 years of my childhood. It might be difficult for you to conceive how drilling day and night was like but, honestly the time then was daunting and hard. When we didn’t perform well, or even complained about the tiring training, the coach would punish us by forbidding us from having dinner. Although I was exhausted by the end of every day, I put in a lot of effort out of my enthusiasm for gymnastics as I really enjoyed the rhythmic movements and elegant poses. What’s more, there was a group of good peers supporting each other. We laughed and cried, trained and grumbled about the hardship together. These were, beyond doubt, my best memories in childhood.

The silver medal in the 2000 Olympic Games not only brought me praise but also became a turning point of my gymnastic life, since I had already reached the retiring age of a gymnastic athlete. Little difficulty is needed to comprehend how nervous and stressful I was after retirement. In order to earn a living, I had to study. All the English I knew, however, was only the 26 letters. When I told people that my ambition was to get into university, they would tease me for my ignorance and my ‘extraordinarily’ low ability in English. Whatever they said, fortunately, didn’t make me bow down to these obstacles. With determination, I persevered with my studies and overcame the challenges one by one. I even took all my courage to the bars in Central to chat with the foreigners as I treasured every chance to speak English. Eventually, I got a fair result in the public exam at the age of 23, and got admitted to one of the local universities.

Now I am in the 3rd year of my nursing degree. My ambition is to help the underprivileged and propagate the importance of healthcare. As you can see, it is patently obvious that with certain elements, our ambitions are by no means out of our reach. To me, the elements are the 4Ps. Let me explain them thoroughly here.

The first P is passion. Being passionate is of fundamental importance for doing basically everything. If you are enthusiastic about something, the passion can prevail over everything else, including numerous stumbling blocks that lie ahead. If I hadn’t been so passionate, I wouldn’t have tried my best in my gymnastic training. Passion always acts as the incentive boosting you to make more effort, which leads to great success.
Secondly, Perseverance is also of utmost importance. Along the path of pursuing your dreams, you may come across innumerable hurdles that can, over time, cause us to feel lost. Stamina is what makes us hold on without giving up. It is all about endurance, patience and hard work, which will lead you to overcome the failures and achieve your ambitions.

The third P stands for Praises. Sometimes you can give yourself some appreciation. For instance, keeping up the running habit is exhausting. So why don’t we stop for a while at every checkpoint and praise ourselves for trying so hard? Few will doubt the advantages of encouragement. However, we must realise that even when we are in the face of obstacles, or that we fail to do something, we can still reward ourselves. Praises, inarguably, do engender our confidence and elevate our spirits.

The fourth P is Peers. Peers fight for success with you, and they understand your feelings. While people fret about how high you can fly, only peers care about whether you feel tired. Sometimes they do exert peer pressure on you, but it is a kind of healthy force, which reinforces your growth and makes you more capable.

All in all, with dreams and the 4Ps, your ambitions are on no account unachievable. It is high time for you to start to make your dreams come true. With best wishes, I genuinely hope that all of you can achieve your ambitions very soon.

Thank you.

Achieving your ambitions - Where there is a will, there is a way

Joyce Wong SD

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Have you ever imagined not having any ambitions in your entire life? Having no aspiration is just like sailing without a compass or a child getting lost. We do need an ambition. To me, the boulevard to success is a long journey. But by the end of this, you will definitely receive a fruitful harvest.

The most significant element is persistence. If you give up, everything will be in vain. Having a clear goal and steady plan is your first step.

There is no room for doubt that everyone will be weary of this long journey. It is the reason why we need a plan. A feasible plan can help us attain our targets step by step. It helps us to move forward as we are struggling, feeling tired and hopeless. It is not uncommon to see that everyone will have a thought of giving up. That’s why a famous author, Tobias Wolff, mentioned, “We are made to persist. That’s how we find out who we are.” Determination is an indispensable element since we are striving. Moreover, a plan is to help us to find out our direction. It can definitely shorten our avenue to success. No matter how many difficulties you encounter, a durative plan can help you to deal with it.

Can any of us achieve our ambitions at once? Actually, it is impossible. Leonardo da Vinci is an ideal illustration of this. Da Vinci was fond of painting when he was just a fourteen-year-old child. He was one of the apprentices of a famous artist. The artist kept demanding him to draw eggs. Although Da Vinci didn’t understand if it was
necessary to draw eggs endlessly, not a word did he say to complain. He had continued this easy and simple task for a few years. Nowadays, everybody knows how successful he was. His representative work “Mona Lisa” has been on everybody’s lips for many years. He plays a crucial role among artists. All your success just depends on how much effort you put in. Had Da Vinci not persisted in practicing, he would not have been such a successful artist. Even though the destination may be so far away that you unable to imagined it, be persistent, you will attain your aspiration, indeed.

As the old saying goes, “Failure is the mother of success.” Without a doubt, failure is in fact a normal phase. Failure is an inevitable step. So Wa Wai, who is a Paralympics medalist, can tell you the reason. Although So Wa Wai is handicapped, his enthusiasm about being an athlete has never waned. It is no exaggeration to say that it is so difficult to be an athlete for a disabled person. However, he didn’t give up. He kept practicing to strive for his dream. He has experienced numerous difficulties and failure. Despite these, de didn’t give up. He didn’t retreat from those exhausting training sessions. Now, he has become a legend in Hong Kong and a role model for many people. Yes, it is a misery to encounter failure, but it is just a minor step. We can acquire experience as we are looking for the best approach. Don’t be defeated on the first attempt. Persistence is the main key to cope with perplexity.

Everyone has his own ambition, and so do I. I am going to face the greatest hurdle in my life. I am having my Diploma Secondary Education Examination in Form Six. Even though my parents do not put a lot of pressure on me, I am still feeling extremely stressful. My future career will depend on the result of this examination. To achieve my ambition, the first thing for me to do is to be persistent. Some said that “Persistence is the most important element of learning.” I need to strive for it, struggling and never giving up.

Persistence opens the door to ambition, success appears at the destination. Well goes an old saying, “Where there is a will, there is a way.” Never give up and be persistent. Thank you.
On the contrary, there are many people opposed to such a notion. Those drawbacks can be boiled down into two main aspects.

While talking about the downsides, the prevalence of downloading has sparked a growing concern about morality and ethics. The prerequisite of this dispute is the infringement of the copyright laws, which is illegal and should not be encouraged. What they have done shows a lack of respect for the creators’ originality. Letting them download films and music is only another way to give green light to the teenagers to steal from the others’ pockets. Does it therefore make it acceptable for one to be a thief just because of such an indirect approach of stealing? The breach of the law is probably a blight to the moral education to the younger generation.

On the other hand, one may argue on the basis that free downloading is not fair to the companies. It is easy to perceive the contrast between the well-known companies and the small ones. The allowance may help some companies in promotion but it does not mean that the small companies will benefit from it. Adolescents will download their creations instead of consuming them. It will undoubtedly cause a financial deprivation due to a decrease in profit. Some people advocate the importance of creativity, but instead, this may somehow pose a hindrance to their publication.

Provided with the factors outlined above, we may conclude that downloading films or music from the Internet infringes their property right and also discourages them from publishing although it may boost their publicity among the public and may encourage creativity. However, ironically, it probably shows a blatant disregard of their originality and intellectual properties at the same time. It is high time that the public should learn to be responsible for the resources and their creators.

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**Hong Kong is Not a Sweet Home**

Anna Cheuk SE

Being one of the most highly developed modern cities in the world, Hong Kong provides you with countless material comforts. Magnificent large-scale shopping plazas, tasty delicacies from all over the world, the trendiest stuff and spectacular city views are all available. Nevertheless, the Happiness Index of Hong Kong is merely 1.16 while that of the highest-ranking country; Denmark has a score of 4.24, somehow indicating quite a vast difference of the people’s perceived enjoyment. On the face of it, Hong Kong citizens have long been envisaged to be gratified with such a wide variety of material possessions while actually, they are awfully displeased; and there are plenty of reasons for this terrible situation.

First and foremost, the living environment of Hong Kong is inconceivably horrible. Most of the families in Hong Kong live in a humble abode of 400 square feet. All of the front doors are huddled together in a small space. A normal apartment is just like a snail shell. Besides, you may take a rather long time to fall asleep if you are not accustomed to the light and noise pollution around. By the way, let’s not forget about the grave air pollution as well. These few problems have frightened away quite a few foreigners the past decade. What’s more, most Hongkongers live far away from nature and cannot enjoy it, which is arguably one of the most basic requirements to healthy living. The soaring modernization and lack of natural environment inhibit Hongkongers from obtaining relaxation and experience tranquility. In addition, streets are generally crowded and traffic jams are common in busy places so having a car cannot really facilitate your transportation. Nobody would like to live in such a cramped, inconvenient and dirty place.
OASIS BE GOOD

Secondly, Hong Kong is entirely dominated by competitions. The first significant competition in one’s life starts when one is only three years old. That’s the interview for a place in the kindergarten. Children are to show their intelligence while aiming at being accepted by a high-quality kindergarten so that they can win on the starting line. In the future, they also need to strive for a place at a well-known primary school, a prestigious secondary school and even a long-established university. Their childhood will be riddled with homework and exams, stress and tension. People compare themselves with others all the time and thus can become less genuine and contented. They may develop an inferiority complex and lose their sense of security. To make things worse, driven by a desire to be more successful, people are more likely to work around the clock, attend courses endlessly and have a suffocating lifestyle. A large amount of Hongkongers are in a sub-healthy state these days and quite a few suffer from serious lifestyle diseases such as different kinds of allergies and stomach ulcers. Some may even develop mental illnesses because of the extreme stress and hectic pace of life.

Last but not least, you will be overcome with shock by the high cost of living in Hong Kong. Hongkongers pursue delicate, classy and expensive stuff driven by glamour. Placing an emphasis on superficialities and materialism is common. People would like to spend time on working rather than accompanying their families as they think money is of the utmost significance and urgency. Hongkongers do have sufficient reasons for embracing this value, as they have to struggle hard to have their own flats, enjoy high-standard material pleasures and receive first-class medical treatments. You must be a madman if you live in Hong Kong, unless you want to be a slave to money.

All in all, the price you have to pay far outweighs the appalling living conditions in Hong Kong even though a wide variety of material enjoyments are available. It’s not easy to be physically and mentally healthy in this city, thus it would be safe to conclude that Hong Kong is far from being a home sweet home these days.

Never Give Up, Just Learn and Change
Jackson Yuen SE

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to give a speech to you today. Have you ever thought about how to achieve your ambitions? Yes, I have. I believe that if we can strive for our goals, we will attain them at last. As far as I am concerned, there are many boulevards to establishing our aims.

Beyond doubt, the ways of meeting our objectives are attributable to several factors, with putting more effort into your work being the major one. “I never did anything by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident: they came by work.” I sympathize with what Thomas A Edison said. I believe that there is no substitute for hard work. The reason a lot of people don’t recognize opportunity is because it goes around wearing overalls and it looks like hard work. It tells us that there is no success without being assiduous. Nothing can replace hard work, it’s fundamental to attain your ambitions. If you are not willing to be diligent, you don’t even have a chance at success. No one succeeds and says, “That was really easy!” Additionally, you have to have a never-give-up attitude. You must be willing to stick to a task that you’re passionate about and never lose focus. Some of you may still think that the reason he could develop so many devices that greatly influenced life around the world is because he was a precociously talented man. However, it is not the major reason. He said, “Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.” You have the ability to work hard. You have the ability to stay focused. The question is, “Are you going to do it?”

A further avenue to achieving your ambitions is viewing our life, not as a compilation of failures, but as a series of necessary experiments letting us know what doesn’t work and how we can improve ourselves. In 2012, Lebron James became an NBA champion. He is an American professional basketball player for the Miami Heat.
and he has been an NBA Finals MVP and has earned ALL-NBA honors. His list of achievements and leadership during the Heat’s 2012 championship run have led a majority of basketball analysts, experts and writers to consider him the best player in the NBA today. But do you know what happened to him in 2011? In the 2011 NBA Finals, Miami stumbled against the Dallas Mavericks six games despite holding a 2-1 series lead going into Game 4. James received the brunt of the criticism for the loss since he slighted his rivals. He was the number one overall in the 2003 NBA Draft and named the 2003 – 2004 NBA Rookie of the Year. However, he was defeated in the 2011 NBA Finals. His potential had given way to disappointment. Many questions nagged at him, turning shrill and mean and confining. Luckily, James didn’t give up, but instead he said, “The best thing that happened to me last year was us losing the Finals. It was the best thing in my career because I got back to the basics. It humbled me.” After that, Lebron James became more mature and reformed his physical skills to match the needs of his team. As a result, his skills and talents are now second to none in the world. It shows that we need to learn from mistakes and correct them. You may take a battering from others, but you should insist on pursuing your targets.

The last factor to establish your aims is to always face your limitations and obstacles head on. Whenever we speak of basketball, what immediately springs to mind is Michael Jordan. In spite of being a great player, he faced severe limitations in his games that kept him from obtaining the ultimate prize. It was his decision to face his weakness, rather than running away from it, which allowed him to perform at the highest levels. Michael Jordan once said, “I work on my weakness until they became my greatest strengths.” Most people spend their time running away from their weaknesses rather than seeking to overcome them. This ultimately limits their growth.

In closing, in order to achieve your ambitions, there are many things calling out to be done. All of them are within your capacity. Please take action now. Thank you!

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A Life-changing Experience
Ray Chan 5E

Good afternoon principal, teachers and fellow schoolmates. It is my utmost honour to be here with all of you in this beautiful afternoon.

Hong Kong is an affluent metropolis, yet it is full of discriminations, disharmony and bitterness among different social strata. I, as a social worker, am determined to reconcile problems and overcome hurdles created by various people and guide those desperate for help out from their plights. It has been my craving and aspiration to give a helping hand to the underprivileged and needed ones. Consequently, I have opted for being a distinguished social worker as my life-long occupation. Here I am not trying to persuade every one of you to become a social worker when you graduate, but to share with all of you here my life-changing experience.

When I was still in my youth, I had already been cultivated with a caring, ardent and conscientious character by my parents. I was determined to treat everyone wholeheartedly so I always yearned for peace and concord in return. Otherwise, I was just aiming to lead a normal and undisturbed life until I appallingly uncovered my best friend Hoisky’s secret, which had changed my perception towards the values of life completely.

It all started when I swapped my cell phone with her thoughtlessly one day a few years ago. When I switched on the screen, I was shocked and stunned to discover that she was browsing a website about compensated dating! It was so unbelievable that I subsequently sought for her in-depth explanation. Eventually, she told me hesitatingly about her family background. She was actually from an uprooted family with her parents being divorced when she was very young. She continued living with her father, who was fired from his company during the financial tsunami. To make
matters worse, her older brother was a reclusive adolescent who was reluctant to confront the tension and pressure of our bustling society and could not serve as a financial support for the family. As a result, Hoisy decided to earn ‘fast’ and ‘easy’ money through compensated dating to make up for the insufficiency in her family. Little imagination was needed to comprehend the dilemma she was in: whether to perpetually lead a dog’s life, or to twist her moral values for a better material life. In a bid to gain more recognition from her peers and elude being looked down upon, she chose the path to decadence and engaged in compensated dating.

‘I bought the branded and trendy products with that money because...sometimes I have a sense of inferiority.’ She confessed. At that time, my sentiments were mixed with fear, worry, helplessness but also empathy. How come there could be such a diametric difference and stark contrast between us? I was leading a luxurious life while she was continually struggling in poverty and facing moral challenges. I was sympathetic towards her misfortune; nevertheless, in my opinion, under no circumstances should anyone accept sexual intimacy in exchange for wealth. It was totally unjustifiable. Therefore, I decided to help her as much as I could. I courageously dialed her father to inform him of the lack of tender solicitude and mutual trust he displayed towards his daughter. More importantly, I persuaded Hoisy to shun that ludicrous activity and turn over a new leaf in her life by helping her find a job through tutoring primary school pupils.

A few months later, I was exhilarated and flattered to see her improvement in life. Not only did she respect herself more, her confidence had also drastically improved. Since then, we have become bosom buddies. That was undeniably an invaluable experience. The ability to help, or to rescue someone from distress, gave me a sense of success and satisfaction. Frankly speaking, no one in their right mind could simply let tragedies happen without trying to intervene. In the wake of Hoisy’s deplorable incident, I decided to choose social work as my ideal career as I know I enjoy rectifying devastating problems and I take immense pleasure in helping people in need.

There are innumerable sorts of problems and hardships to be overcome by a social worker. Multifarious issues are prevalent in this chaotic society – family violence, people living in exacerbating poverty, child abuse, social injustice, abandoned elderly relying on the insufficient CSSA, ethnic minorities being deprived of basic rights, to name but a few. It is a challenge for social workers to tackle as many of these enigmas as possible before the situation becomes irrevocable.

On reflection, everyone ought to live their days to the fullest. It is my greatest wish that everybody can shower each other with the joy of generosity and mutual help. Conceivably, our future could be even more impressive and wonderful with our concerted effort. Let’s make the world a better place and if you ever have a dream, don’t stop pursuing it, because you can also be the one who can make a difference!

Thank you.
Achieving Your Ambitions Is Not Inconceivable

Rina Ho SE

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It’s my honour to have this opportunity to share my ideas about ambitions with you. To begin with, I’d like to tell you of a television documentary I watched about eagles. Eagles have a lifespan of seventy years, which is the longest among birds. Do you know the secret of their longevity? Actually, there is an acid test when it is forty years old. Because at that time, its ageing claws are too weak to hunt, its beaks are too clumsy to eat, and its wings are too weighty to fly. In order to return to its majestic form, the eagle leads an ascetic life: it beats the rock using the beak until it comes off. Then it pulls out every toenail and feather. It’s hard to imagine how painful it is. Fortunately, the eagle is reborn after this five-month trial, which means that it has achieved its ambition of flight again. It can be seen that although the journey to our ambitions is not plain sailing, it can be achieved by faith and perseverance. Yes. It can be done.

As I’ve mentioned, faith is one of the traits you must own, because it can give us a clear direction so as to avoid being trapped in a maze. Doctor Sun Yat-Sen is an ideal illustration of this quality. He was an aspiring giant who led the 1911 Revolution. We cannot assert that he was absolutely successful. However, had not Doctor Sun had faith in saving China, the feudal monarchy would not have ceased its reign.

Isn’t faith vital to our boulevard to ambitions? Some of us always withdraw from challenges as soon as possible because of low self-esteem. In fact, most of the Chinese at the time didn’t believe that the revolution would be successful, except for Doctor Sun and his followers.

Without a doubt, dilemmas make you stressed. But we cannot deny that they are just a blessing in disguise. Like Walt Disney said, ‘All our dreams can come true, if we have courage to pursue them.’ No matter how others comment on you, criticize you, or contradict you, face up to the plights and try your best to overcome these obstacles with your faith.

What’s more, perseverance is another indispensable trait. It’s said that, ‘By perseverance, the snail reached the ark.’ In my opinion, by perseverance, you can achieve your ambitions. Take Jeremy Lin as an example. Having shown his superior ability, this unknown boy was suddenly on the cover page of Time with the issue titled ‘Linsanity’. Perhaps somebody may think that fortune helps him to get a chance. But I believe his success was an inevitable outcome. While the other unfulfilled people indulged themselves in complaining, Jeremy, whose salary was the lowest in the team, bent his attention on practice and watching the games of other outstanding players.

From the experience of Jeremy Lin, we know that there is no short cut on the way to achieving your ambitions. Also, as Thomas Edison said, ‘Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.’ If you are persevering enough, achieving your ambitions is not inconceivable.

Although we realize how difficult it is to achieve our ambitions, we also realize that achieving our ambitions is possible. We cannot be a freeloader, but we can be a dreamer and fighter. If the ageing eagles can achieve their ambition and fly leisurely, dear schoolmates, why can’t we?

Thank you.
A Break-in
Shelley Lam SE

The depressing climate made this night unbearable. This was the weather I hated most, a night with torrential rain and frightening thunder which brought my woeful memories back to life. Because of my blue mood, I went to bed earlier than usual.

I lay on my bed, trying to shake away my depression. I still remembered the day my father left us. It was also a night of pouring rain, with deafening thunder and endless despair. I fell asleep while I was trying to banish the heart-breaking memory from my mind. Suddenly some loud and urgent rapping on the front door woke me up.

I was a bit surprised at first. Who would knock on our door so late at night? Perhaps it was my forgetful mother, who returned home after her night shift. I rubbed my sleepy eyes and struggled my way to open the door. I said, “Hey Mum, you have forgotten to bring your key many times already…” I ceased when I realized that the person standing outside was not my mother. It was a fierce-looking middle-aged man instead. And I had no idea who he was.

Having heard so many stories of robbery and break-ins around the neighbourhood, I quickly slammed the door shut, but the man slid his hand in and held the door tightly. “Oh! My God, he will kill me,” I thought.

“Stop! Kate, can’t you recognize me?” the man asked. I was shocked and I grew suspicious of the identity of this man. How did he know my name? Who was he? I scrutinized that man carefully. He was wearing a shabby T-shirt which seemed to have been left unwashed for ages and a pair of trousers with a lot of holes. His hair looked greasy and obviously he hadn’t washed or combed it for ages. I did not think I knew a man like that. He was a total stranger to me! I tried to push the door close again.

“Stop! Stop, please! I… I am your father!” the man cried. I stared at him blankly. My father? Who was my father? The man who stole away the happiness of my childhood?

“My father…” I sighed with deep sadness. It was years ago. One night, my father disappeared from us without a word. He only left us astronomical debt. He made my kind-hearted and fragile mother work day and night. He made me lose all the fond memories I should have with my father. He deprived us of the warmth we should have enjoyed in our family. At the beginning, I cried every day. Soon, the face of my father faded out from my memory quickly.

After a long silence, I smiled at the man and said, “I am sorry, but you are not my dad. My father is a man who cared for his family. Unfortunately, he died years ago in a traffic accident.” The man was stunned. Then, he froze. I closed the door slowly, tears running down my cheeks.

Truly, my father had died already. The man who stood outside was no one but a total stranger.
There are various indicators to judge whether a city is good or not. Some say that a great city should be caring and willing to take care of the underprivileged. To me, a well-known city in the world may not be caring enough. A caring city should give its citizens happiness, which is always invaluable. If I were to rank the world cities, a good education, affordable medical care service with an unbiased government which cares the grassroots would be my foci.

A good education system is always the cornerstone of a metropolis. Our prospect lies entirely on the next generation. Nurturing them, therefore, is a must and the best way to better the city. With more quality labour, the city can engage in more productive industry. The overall quality of life is expected to be improved. On the other hand, what will happen to the city if its education fails? The crime rate will probably rise, the productivity of the society will decrease, and there are many other consequences that no one can afford. Thus good education is imperative to the development of the city.

Apart from education, the level of medical care is also one of my greatest concerns. Affordable medical care along with a public medical service system does affect the international image of a city. A reputable city should establish an effective system and provide professional service to its patients. By failing that, citizens’ quality of life, particularly the senior citizens’, will fall drastically and the legitimacy of the government will suffer a heavy blow. For instance, aging population in Hong Kong has been an acute problem. The requirement of medical care has become more demanding. Nonetheless, the public medical service system fails to provide sufficient and effective service to the elderly. It is not unusual to see long queues in front of the outpatient department of hospitals. The deteriorating service undoubtedly enrages the citizens, for they tolerate this anymore. If the government could consider the medical needs of the citizens, there would be a totally different story.

However, medical care is nothing compared to an unbiased government, caring for the grassroots. A successful governance of a government does save the poor from the water and fire as the betterment of the livelihood of the people is certainly an uplift of their living standard. Social Harmony originates from the movers and shakers caring for the needy. Otherwise, the opposition between the authority and the citizens will cause social unrest. In Hong Kong, there was a riot in 1966. And at that time Hongkongers led a poor life, earning little money but with great burdens. The increase of the Star Ferry fare prompted the burst of public anger, which greatly impacted the British colonial government. It showed the livelihood of the grassroots should always be the domestic priority of the government, and actually it held the majority in society. Thereupon, the British colonial government later implemented various policies, including amending the labour law of Hong Kong in 1968, to pacify, and secure the living quality of the Hong Kong people.

To conclude, a fair education system, a good medical service system and a government not slanting to the rich are the three most fundamental elements of a metropolis. A city will never flourish and be prosperous unless these areas are considered.
A Step Toward Eradicating Domestic Violence

Calvin Poon SF

According to the recent survey conducted by the Social Welfare Department, the number of cases of domestic violence has been surging which has aroused the public’s awareness. While the government takes actions in a bid to combat domestic violence, the number of female victims has been skyrocketing. Why would the men in those cases opt to harm their beloveds? Why do the women still choose to remain in such abusive relationships? In this essay, these questions will be discussed and some suggestions will be introduced.

We are given these soaring figures of women suffering from domestic violence and some wonder why the men involved commit such violent acts on their other halves. It is believed that stress is the main culprit. Being the breadwinner of a family, men are usually under tremendous pressure owing to the fact that many are unemployed and underemployed due to the cutthroat demanding nature of employers. However, men can hardly find some time to release their pressure and get rid of the things that bother them after work. As a result, their anger accumulates and they get agitated easily. If the women do anything that makes them unhappy, the men may vent their anger on them. Their partners, therefore, have no alternative but to endure these eruptions of the emotional expression.

When it comes to the reasons why women choose to stay in abusive relationships, the major cause lies in the fact that they don’t know how to seek help. For instance, when her husband hits her, what should she do? Call the police for help? It is ironic since no one would like to spread bad news about themselves and become the focus of some negative rumours. They will, instead, feel ashamed and embarrassed when it comes to being abused by their partners, so they are left with no alternative but to maintain that kind of abusive relationship. On the top of their reluctance in seeking assistance, the female victims, if they are not working women, usually don’t have the ability to survive in this city except by following her abuser. In that case, their future will be crammed with doom and gloom since they are not financially independent enough to make a living for themselves, not to mention raising their children.

To effectively alleviate this alarming problem, both short-term and long-term measures must be considered before it is too late.

First and foremost, the short-term measure I suggest is that the government should set up an assistance programme protecting the women who are being abused. In this programme, social workers would organise regular visitations to the concerned families counseling the victims. If things are going to the extreme, the female victims should be informed that there are shelters which are set up to protect them and they can stay in these shelters temporarily. To make the assistance programme feasible, imposing stricter laws will be an effective means. Undoubtedly, the number of domestic violence cases will decline sharply given that it places a deterrent effect on the potential abusers.

Educating the public and enabling the women to work are the long-term measures. The government should hold more talks about means to tackle domestic abuse. They should also carry out some training courses teaching the female sufferers some occupational skills so that they can have the ability to survive without the help of their abusive partners.

It seems impossible that we can resolve this problem in the foreseeable future. However, it will definitely be solved provided that we put our shoulder to the wheel.
What Happened to James?

Martin Wong 5F

James Ho walked down Waterloo Road as if he did not have a care in the world. He was happy. His last business deal had made him a very rich man. He whistled and smiled to himself. In fact, he was in such a good mood that he did not pay much attention to a large black Mercedes Benz that had stopped beside the pavement ahead of him. As he reached the car, the passenger door opened and a voice called to him from inside the car.

“Please get inside the car, Mr. Ho,” the voice said. It was a deep voice and James Ho stopped suddenly. The voice was familiar! “Who are you?” James asked confusingly. James gazed through the window and he was stricken with repulsion and froze after seeing a disgusting face —— Bob Chan, the ‘dear’ rival of James in business before James had become a tycoon.

“Maybe it is time for revenge,” James whispered to himself and got in the car. The ambience inside the car was mixed with tension and embarrassment. Then, Bob inquired sincerely, “Hi James, I know that you have quit your job. I am here to invite you to work with me.” Bob’s weird tone made James tremble since he had not seen such a friendly Bob before. “What? You want me to enter your company?” James refused loudly, “I have a lot of money plus I am carefree and without worries now. Why should I leave my luxurious lifestyle?” Bob leaned forward and continued to speak, “I know that you have plenty of money and it can be a large principle! I assure you that we can earn an enormous amount of money in my lucrative business! Let me take you to a place where it might change your mind.”

Next, they were driven to a building near a country park. Bob told James that the building was an orphanage. Bob elaborated that it is subsidized by most of the profit of his company. Staring in front of the orphanage, flashes of old memories sprang into James’ mind, as James was an orphan coincidentally. After keeping his silence for a while, James made a wise decision.

For the sake of this orphanage, James accepted the offer. He did not treat it as a career but as meaningful voluntary work. Henceforth, there was a sudden u-turn in James and Bob’s hostile relationship and it was not an exaggeration to say that they became mutual friends who treated each other like brothers. Although James wasn’t privileged anymore, he lived with happiness and satisfaction like he had never experienced before.
Give Them a Second Chance
Helen Chan 6A

Dear Sir/Madam,

In this city of harsh rivalries among top firms, doubtless most of the prestigious companies would look for highly educated elites to serve as their employees in order to boost their competitiveness. However, in the job market, amid the highly competitive atmosphere, people like reformed criminals and drug addicts are actually often discriminated against during their job seeking process, making it extremely hard for them to get accustomed to their transformed lives, let alone feel comfortable about their statuses. Therefore, as an intern at the Hong Kong Correctional Services, I feel an obligation to introduce to you all a new campaign launched by the government – the Second Chance Campaign.

In life, all of us have made and are still making mistakes; no one is a saint. No matter whether we are talking about minor flaws that may affect interpersonal relationships or major blunders that may ruin our criminal records, I believe that everyone deserves a second chance to rectify their faults and start over again. Thus, the Second Chance Campaign has been rolled out in an attempt to provide an opportunity for all Hong Kong businesses to recruit reformed criminals and drug addicts in a bid to help them turn over a new leaf, gain confidence and be acknowledged by society once again. In fact, it is an uphill battle to keep an open mind and show acceptance to reformed people, but by giving them assistance, we can bring positive changes to their lives and society at large.

You may argue that on the face of it, employing these reformed criminals and drug addicts may be risky to your companies’ reputation and the safety of other staff members, however, we can assure you all of these people in the scheme have changed and developed better personalities and habits through months of training. All they need is acceptance, or perhaps some concrete support and opportunities.

Therefore, instead of avoiding reformed criminals and drug addicts like plagues, responsible employers should give them a fair employment chance and try their very best to recruit them as part of their corporate team if the situation allows. Moreover, the Hong Kong government would subsidise enterprises that join the Second Chance scheme by providing resources and financial support. Further vocational training would also be provided to those workers in order to guarantee a substantial skill level. It’s definitely a win-win situation.

According to recent surveys conducted by several universities, unemployed people tend to participate in burglaries and drug trafficking as they lack income and financial support. Therefore companies may contribute to society by employing these reformed people in order to minimize the crime rate in Hong Kong. In fact, most criminals and drug dealers do not go against the law because they are bad natured but because they are in the breadline! So instead of leaving them in the lurch and giving them a cold shoulder, employers should fulfill their Corporate Social Responsibility and join the campaign.

As the saying goes, it is more blessed to give than to receive. By joining the Second Chance Campaign and providing job opportunities to these reformed criminals and drug dealers, their criminal records will no longer be their stumbling blocks in their lives and thus they can really start afresh. Your help would definitely open up a new page in their lives! Stop turning a blind eye to them, because your help means a lot more than what you could possibly have imagined. So don’t hesitate and act now!

To find out more details about the scheme, please feel free to visit our website at http://info.gov.hk/secondchancecampaign. Their future is in your hands.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
SEE! Hong Kong – Our Home!
Jason Chin 6A

Hong Kong is a society incorporated with a wide variety of cultures like Chinese, Westerners and the Filipino just to list a few. With the contribution of 7,000,000 people from a myriad of races, Hong Kong is constructed to be a comprehensive house in Economic, Social and Environmental aspects which represent the foundation, the pillars and the rooftop. However, because of the continuous upsurge of population in Hong Kong, the house becomes deplorable since the fabric of the house is being corroded.

“Property prices are still on the rise, the government can do nothing to stabilize the market....” This kind of reports can always be heard on the news daily. Indeed, the staggering high property prices which stems from overcrowding is the main economic crux which is detrimental to the foundation of our house. True, Hong Kong is now a cosmopolitan city which has a fully-fledged economic fabric. Yet, the property industry is dominating the market. Because of the implementation of the Individual Visit Scheme, more and more mainlanders are enthralled by the market of Hong Kong and visit us. But what attracts them the most? The property industry! Mainlanders can simply buy a flat then leave it untouched and wait for the property price to rise. By doing so, they can earn more than a million dollars in a short period of time! This lucrative way to profit lures more mainlanders to this city to buy flats in. In contrast, the Gini-coefficient of Hong Kong is at record high which demonstrates that the income gap between the grassroots and the rich is widening. The destitute can hardly afford a flat! For instance, there is a flat located in Mong Kok that cost $4,000,000. Let say the poor can earn $8,000 per month, which means they have to work for almost 42 years to buy a flat in Mong Kok! It is such a mission impossible for them! With this situation, hatred towards the money-oriented businessmen occurs. Protests and strikes are organized by the poor in order to stand

against the property hegemony. This blatant downside to overcrowding will undoubtedly cripple the harmony of our society and be harmful to our foundation – the economy of Hong Kong.

Apart from jeopardizing the economy, the increasing population is deleterious to our society, which poses threats to the pillars of our house. That the hospital service and the welfare system of Hong Kong are comprehensive is undeniable. Hong Kong permanent residents have the right to enjoy the aforementioned rights. However, with the increase of the double-negative pregnant women from the mainland, the public hospital service system and the welfare system of Hong Kong are under undue financial burden. For instance, let’s predict that there will be 10 double-negative pregnant women coming to Hong Kong to give birth per day, and there will be only one baby delivered per each double-negative pregnancy, after a year, 3650 babies will be born. Perhaps you may say that, 3,650 is not a massive number, how can it be detrimental to our welfare system? True, 3,650 is not a big deal for the population; however, as Lee Lai Shan stated, nurturing a kid would take about 4 million. Each of them will cost 4 million from the HKSAR government and 146 billion will be used as subsidies to aid the double-negative babies! Is that still a small amount of money? Of course not! Worse still, this considerable amount of money will be on Hong Kong citizens’ tax account, which means the responsibility will be passed to Hong Kong people. How ludicrous it is when we, Hong Kong taxpayers, have to discharge such ‘reasonable’ obligations! The offspring of the double-negative pregnant women is conducive to the overcrowding which is severely destroying the pillars of our society.

Last but not least, we come to the rooftop of our house, the environmental aspect. Imagine that you are living next to the landfill, being awoken by the awful odour every day, being surrounded by its residue and being distracted by the daily operations of the landfills. This is what will be happening 10 years from now if the population of Hong Kong keeps soaring! Due to the ascending population in Hong
Kong, more and more solid waste is disposed of every day. According to a prediction made by the Hong Kong University, landfills will reach their maximum capacity in 10 years. It means Hong Kong will be enveloped by rubbish after 10 years! Still, some of you may say, ‘How about using incinerators? True, using incinerators can sharply mitigate the burden of the landfills. Yet, during the progress of incineration, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and methane are emitted which make Hong Kong awash with pollutants and leads to abysmal air pollution levels! Can you imagine, after 10 years, it becoming a necessity for everyone to wear masks every day? How frightening it is! This is how overcrowding can destabilise our rooftop, the environmental aspect!

All in all, overcrowding is now an alarming issue which cannot be overlooked. The skyrocketing population of Hong Kong is now eroding at our foundation, destroying our pillars and demolishing our rooftop! But, Social, Economic and Environmental aspects are never mutually exclusive. We are striving for sustainable development. More campaigns should be launched by the government to save our house, strengthen the foundation, stabilize the pillars and safeguard the rooftop. With concerted effort made by the government and the public, I am sure that Hong Kong will be a harmonious yet cohesive society!

The Joys of being a Teenager in Hong Kong
Jason Chin 6A

Good afternoon fellow students. Sitting in this cozy hall, having electronic gadgets in your bag and enjoying luxury goods in your daily life, do you think you should be satisfied with these superficial forms of enjoyment? Definitely not! Let me show you some statistics. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations about the Happiness Index, Hong Kong, which is such a developed city was ranked 84th in 2009 whereas Costa Rica, a country suffering stiff poverty stood out from the crowd and astoundingly was crowned the happiest country. Teenagers, from the survey, we can tell that wealth dies not mean happiness. Yes, a symbol of wealth does not signify a condition of happiness. You may then ask why Hong Kong was such a wealthy city, ranked that low. If being wealthy is not true happiness, then what is true happiness actually? As stated by Helen Keller, being happy is not about self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose. What about Hong Kong? Is Hong Kong’s teenagers are on the right track to pursue true happiness? For me, the happiness resembles a house, but Hong Kong now is composed of a weak foundation, deplorable pillars and an abysmal rooftop.

Let’s get started with the foundation. A fair society is a foundation of true happiness to Hong Kong teenagers. What makes me describe the foundation weak? It is because the income gap between the rich and the grassroots is widening, which means the wealth disparity is severe. The Gini Coefficient of Hong Kong is 0.434 which is at record high. Property hegemony is the crux of the existing situation. The policies of the government are in favor of the rich but neglect the interest of the poor. For example, the price of the first-hand property is soaring; the middle-classes’ income can hardly cover it. However, the mercy is showed by the Hong Kong government on the rich and the collusion with them conspires to property
OASIS BE GOOD

hegemony. What’s more, the poor are not strong enough to interfere in politics. Yes, you may argue that the disadvantaged group is empowered to enjoy freedom of speech under the Basic Law. However, it doesn’t mean that the government will listen to their urge. Whether the government is going to consider their request is another business. That’s why the condition of Hong Kong is molded as business-oriented, that’s why the rich become richer and the poor become poorer, that’s why we will never be on the same level playing field with the rich! How pathetic it is! You can see why the aforementioned foundation was described as a weak one. Now, fellows, try to imagine, if you are adolescents living under the devastating condition, how can you be happy even you can’t be equally treated? How can you be pleasant when you are not on the same level playing field with your rivals? How can you be joyful living in this unfair society?

Here comes the pillar of the house of true happiness. The pillars are perceived to represent Hong Kong’s education. As you know, Hong Kong is being believed to run a knowledge-based economic fabric. Which means people in Hong Kong should be well-educated. However, is it the truth? Or, is it just a rumor? Let’s think of our school life; going to school with a crammed schedule is undoubtedly undue pressure to us. Our schedules are fully packed with quizzes and questions. All these tasks are no skeptically torturing our brains and body. We are overwhelmed just because of one significant reason, the exam-oriented school life. In these days and age, Hong Kong is waxed as a competitive society; adolescents are going to their great lengths to enroll in limited university quota. Under this rigorous condition of the society, a considerable amount of ‘exam machines’ are churned out, forcing teenagers to combat examinations. For example, having two Chinese quizzes, then an English uniform test, finally, here comes a mathematically examination. This is what we are going through every day, my fellow! Worse still, the change of the education system is even aggravating the situation. Due to the changing of the education system and the abolishment of the HKCEE substituted by the HKDSE, more than 70,000 candidates are competing for 15,000 university quotas. This manifests that only one-forth candidates can enroll in the university. How brutal it is! Fellows, can you still be joyful while undue pressure is clustering in front of you? Can you still be delighted whereas you are confronted with stumbling blocks? Can you still be blissful even your life is soaked with a gloomy and blue atmosphere?

Apart from the solid foundation and stray pillars, a secure rooftop is essential to the house of true happiness. I regard the rooftop as Chinese traditional art. Traditional art is something valuable, something aesthetic and something that symbolizes the beauty of the legacy of art. We should preserve and protect the abundant traditional art like Cantonese Opera in order to cherish what our ancestors bequeath to us and let us enjoy it. However, the Hong Kong government is watching them fade away. With the wait-and-see attitude, they just let our precious art disappear with folded arms. Take Sunbeam Theatre as an example. A week ago, Sunbeam Theatre was forced to close due to the end of the lease. At that moment, all of the citizens were expecting our government, which claims to lay emphasis on striking the balance between urban development and art preservation, to take initiative to give a helping hand. However, we were disappointed. At last, fortunately, an anonymous businessman shows his generosity and donates 4 million to the theatre with sympathy in order to maintain the operation of the theatre for another three years. Teenagers, undoubtedly, the closing of the theatre manifests the death of Cantonese Opera. Meanwhile, in this case, our freedom of enjoying art was deprived of, our chance to uphold the ancestors’ belief was taken, and our right to taste art was exploited. How could we still be content without art?

To conclude, teenagers, material possessions should not be the only things we focus on. In order to create a glamorous future of Hong Kong, all of us have to shoulder the responsibility, to stabilize the foundation, to steady the pillars and strengthen the hardness of the rooftop of the house of true happiness. Teenagers, we should stand up and spare no pains to uphold the worthy purpose. Every one of you is incorporated into the team. Together, we are a family. Together, we can hold our cozy home hand in hand. Together, we can be joyful teenagers in Hong Kong! Thank you!
World Poverty - Is There an Answer?

Anthony Fan 6B

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It’s my pleasure to give a speech here. Recently, there have been some headlines that have caught my eyes. For instance, from the 6:30 news just a moment ago, tens of thousands of deaths were reported in Kenya because of starvation. At the same time, developed countries like the US and Germany are living in bliss, enjoying the fruit of prosperous, stable economies. Meanwhile, ladies and gentlemen, let’s take a look at your sophisticated suit, your elegant new dress and your expensive handbag. Then, think about the people in the third world. People are suffering from starvation, threatened by fatal diseases and poisoned by polluted water. Seeing the wealth gap between us and the impoverished, can we help to alleviate their hardship? Yes, no doubt we CAN!

In the third world, 80% of the population lives on under US$2 a day. In every 10 seconds, a child, according to the Red Cross, dies of AIDS. That means, from the beginning of my speech till now, there are already three innocent children dead. Isn’t it deplorable? Do we have a solution to it? Yes, the answer is affirmative!

We, as citizens of a highly industrialized city, can undoubtedly give the impoverished a hand by sending them food aid and money aid. I mean, at least, we can help them to acquire the basic necessities for survival, and this is simply an easy task for us. You just need to spare a buck from your pocket and it is enough for them to buy a meal. Without basic necessities like food and water, how could they survive, let alone stand on their own feet and develop their country.

However, that’s still far away from the elimination of world poverty. Providing food and monetary aid is never a long-term strategy for the problem. We don’t want the impoverished to live on donations forever. So, here are some suggestions to help them develop self-reliance to be freed from poverty.

First, education is always the best investment to a country. According to UNICEF, 100 million primary-school-age children in developing countries couldn’t afford school fees. How sad it is that a child doesn’t have the right to receive education due to poverty! Can we do something for them? YES! Your donations can help us to build schools and hire teachers for them. Being educated, the impoverished can learn necessary knowledge and skills to find a job. Furthermore, the ability they acquire from schools, like agricultural and basic technical skills, can absolutely help to improve their communities and thus lift them out of the vicious abyss of cross-generation poverty. See, we can do it.

In addition, your donations can help to save countless lives in the third world. As I’ve mentioned before, many Africans died of vaccine-preventable diseases. They need your donations to access medicine to prevent diseases such as malaria and cholera, etc. Because of the patent system, people living in the third world lamentably have to bear the unreasonably high-priced vital drugs. With your donations, we can definitely help them to relieve their financial burden on healthcare, build hospitals with high-tech medical equipment and provide low-price or free vaccines for them. Look, we have the ability to put an end to their plight.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you share my belief that world poverty can be eradicated, please reach out to help. Each dollar of your donations can make a difference to a life. With your donations, the impoverished can buy a meal; with your donations, children in Africa will be given the chance of education; with your donations, lots of people can afford quality medicine and say goodbye to life-threatening diseases. Why hesitate? Support us and let us together make this world a better place! Thank you!
Glamorous City
Darren Chan 6B

If you go to the Tsim Sha Tsui promenade at night, you can see a myriad of tourists dominating the area, and many of them are there just for one reason: To watch the renowned “A Symphony of Light”, a show with light effects and laser beams flashing on the skyscrapers on the other side of the harbor. Most tourists raise their thumbs after watching the show, while the locals shake their heads when they see the lights twinkle over Victoria Harbor. In fact, the show along with the immense neon light signs hanging around the city has been criticized to be a form of light pollution and a waste of electricity, while some argue that they are the sign of Hong Kong’s glamorous prosperity. Why are citizens having such dispersed views? Are there any ways to cater for the opinions of both groups?

It is true that the wide variety of light decorations in Hong Kong has become a remarkable symbol of the nightlife of Hong Kong. From the huge neon light signs and advertising billboards hanged on buildings around Nathan Road, to the light decorations of skyscrapers along the promenade of Victoria Harbour, a tremendous number of tourists have come to this must-see scenic spot to check out and verify the night view of Hong Kong on postcards. The light decoration in Hong Kong is undeniably one of the reasons why people love coming to Hong Kong, without these decor, Nathan Road and Victoria Harbour wouldn’t have been so picturesque and stunning, and there wouldn’t be as many people wanting to capture the view. The light decorations have become an icon of this metropolitan city, and it contributes to the tourism industry of Hong Kong.

Other than attracting tourists, these light decorations have also displayed the creativity of Hong Kong people, and it is still a common method for advertising. Take the neon light signs along Nathan Road as an example, many of the billboards have been hung out there for quite a while, and it’s easy to spot some similarities among them. They’re gorgeous with a very simple design. Such eye-catching and marvelous designs are easily recognized and they create a remarkable image of Hong Kong. Furthermore, these signs can be easily seen by most people on the streets, no matter if they’re on foot or in vehicles, proving that this might be the most effective advertising tactic ever. And during night time, they can become flashing signs that help decorate the city, which shows that the billboards are not only good for advertising, but also for beautifying the city.

Although these decorative lights have contributed so much in creating a glamorous Hong Kong, for locals, these shining lights could be really disturbing. Imagine that you’re living in a subdivided unit in Mong Kok, with a variety of light signs around you. They’re not really a problem during daytime, but when it comes to evening, the trouble will become so obvious that you can hardly ignore. Strong light beams produced by the billboard are hurting the residents’ eyes whenever they look out of the window at night. And when they want to sleep, the billboards are still shining like a morning sun, which are also so bright that a curtain can’t help much to block out the light. What’s more, the heat created alongside the strong glowing lights makes the indoor temperature even higher, despite the flats have only one or more windows provided for ventilation. The signs and decorative lights bring so much disturbance towards local residents that their existence is just for interrupting citizens’ normal lives.

Moreover, the amount of electricity consumed by these decorative lights is eminent, which is controversial whether it is worth it or not. Recently, an apparel store in Causeway Bay revealed that they keep their lights in their shop on 24-7, even when it is out of business hours, just to allow passerbys to see their shop even if it’s midnight. What’s the use of turning all the lights on in the store when there are only a few people passing by? It is not only wasting electricity, it might even be a culprit to global warming, as electricity in Hong Kong usually stems from coal burning, which will release carbon dioxide, one of the most infamous greenhouse gases. Even if by turning on all the lights it makes the shop look cool, does that mean we can sacrifice...
the environment or waste money?

In order to strike a balance between protecting the environment and preserving the special features of the city, both long and short-term actions should be taken and they are namely the 3Ss. For the short term, “surveillance” will be a possible way to help citizens who live next to billboards. The government should set up hotlines or launch outreach teams to let residents report decorative lights that are disturbing their lives to the officials. As some may not know the hotline is set up, it will be more effective to send extra personnel to investigate specific areas with billboards that are dangerous to both the residents’ health and the infrastructure of the city.

And for the long term, “subsidy” and “sustainable” development will be the two key factors for the preservation and continuity of billboards and decorative lights. As aforementioned, the decorative lights have a symbolic meaning to Hong Kong, however they have also brought nuisance to the neighbourhood. One of the culprits of the nuisance is the traditional light bulbs or neon lights that are used for the billboard signs, which releases heat while they shine throughout the evenings. To alleviate the problem, the government should subsidize the owners of the billboards to change the lights into energy-saving light bulbs, which can save energy and reduce heat emittance in order to create a better living environment. Furthermore, sustainable development is needed, as many parts of Hong Kong are undergoing urban redevelopment, it is crucial to preserve the traditional elements while removing the outdated elements which might be perilous to the city. Applying this theory to the development of decorative lights, a balance should be struck between the image of the city and concern from citizens, which are both important for Asia’s World City.

A civilized international city does not only consist of glamorous views and prosperous development, maintaining social harmony is also a must for it. If the government is able to respect and response to citizens’ opinion towards the issue on light pollution while redeveloping the city, society can be more harmonious.

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A Short Life

Darren Chan 6B

I woke up this morning and discovered I was eight feet tall. “Yikes!” That’s the first expression I made as I walked up to the mirror to see myself. At first I really thought that some twerps had fiddled with my mirror, so I decided to step out and find my parents.

‘Hi mom. Good morning dad,’ I greeted them as usual, but their reactions weren’t like usual. Dad dropped his breakfast as well his jaw on the floor, while mom choked on her coffee.

‘What on earth happened to you Alex?’ This question came simultaneously from their mouths.

‘Uh... I don’t know, but you two should be proud that I’m finally not a shorty, right?’ I laughed bitterly and tried to calm my parents down. To little avail, the poor old couple was still shocked by the fact that their son had grown suddenly and they had to lift their heads to talk with him, who was still very short 24 hours ago.

While staring at their son, who was suddenly so tall that he could almost reach the ceiling, my parents demonstrated how to panic.

‘What am I supposed to do?, ‘You can’t go to school like this!’

Their frustration burst like a balloon, and it seemed that I was the only one who was still calm.
‘Well I’m just a bit taller. I didn’t turn into a werewolf! You two should calm down and I’ll just go to school like normal.’

Just right before I returned to my bedroom, my father spoke in a soft tone which I had never heard before, ‘Alex, please...we don’t want you to be in any trouble. Just let us find you a doctor and see what’s wrong, alright?’

Not wanting my parents to be frustrated and worried, I turned my head and gave them a glimpse, ‘Thanks dad, I will do what you want.’ My father’s long face had become perky. He then gave me a warm smile.

An hour later, an old man wearing a decent suit with a milky white robe knocked on the front door of my house. As I heard my mother welcoming this strange doctor in, I stepped out of my room and headed towards the living room.

‘Son, this is doctor Sackmann, ‘Mom showed me the doctor she had called, and in front of me there was the doctor. His over-relaxed gesture and his fake smile brought me the thought that he was a quack, and I shall never be able to return to normal.

‘Hello Alex, I’ve just heard about your case. Mind if you sit down and we have a nice chat?’ He grinned like a fool, but somehow I had to believe him since he was my only possible lifesaver right now.

As I had just sat down, the doctor started talking, ‘I’ve been suspecting that you have a very rare disease called... I guess I’ve forgotten it anyway. But what I’m very sure is that if you’re not being hospitalized as soon as possible, you won’t be able to see the next dawn.’

‘Doctor, you must be out of your mind,’ I tried to stay calm and talk to this maniacal doctor.

‘Even the most idiotic animal on earth won’t believe you. How come I’ll be six feet under the ground in less than 24 hours? That’s ludicrous!’

All of a sudden he jumped up from his chair, pointing his fingers towards my neck, and yelled in a threatening tone. ‘Listen kid. I’ve seen so many people in these 15 years being a doctor. When I told them they were going to die, they did die. You can either trust me or you can buy yourself a coffin and find a nice place for your funeral. What do you think?’ When I thought of my parent’s pleading faces, I knew that I didn’t have any choice.

An hour later I was in Dr. Sackmann’s office—or to be precise, his laboratory.

There were specimens hanging from the ceiling, and equipment for operations was neatly organized and placed on a shelf. The doctor grabbed a book from his messy desk, and he flipped through the book. ‘There it is... Hormone maladjustment. Check this out kid.’ I didn’t really understand the book, but all I knew was that this overgrowth would stretch my body, and my cardiovascular system would break down very soon. I passed the book to my parents. Not surprisingly, they were terrified and insisted that I have the surgery immediately. ‘But there is one thing I should remind you of. The operation will be like restarting his body, excluding his brain fortunately. I assume that nothing wrong would happen, as the operation has a success rate of over 60%...’ while my parents and I felt a bit more relieved, the doctor added, ‘since three out of my five patients survived the operation,’ He grinned. ‘Curse you, doctor,’ my parents and I said simultaneously.

I laid down on the operation table, and before I got passed out because of the anesthetic, I had seen two worried faces staring at me. While I was unconscious, I dreamt of returning to my childhood days, being the shortest kid in the class, and becoming the joke of the year. Everything was like nostalgia, and it seemed like my brain was being formatted. Urgh, that doctor must be a liar...
Ten hours later, I woke up from the operation. My body was in great pain, and all I could move were my mouth and my eyes. My parents were still in front of me, and I could still recognize them, ‘Is this planet earth, or I am already dead?’ My parents hugged me so tight. It was like they hadn’t seen me for years. ‘Wow take it easy!’ I reassured my anxious parents. They shed tears with joy, and they had so many tears that they could have drowned me.

‘So where’s Doctor Sackmann?’ I asked.

‘He left the office right after we paid him.’

‘Oh I just want to thank him in person...’ I got out of bed, and found out that I was the shorty about five feet tall again. But who cared? As long as I was alive and normal again...

While on my way home, I tuned in to the radio and listened to the news, and now I knew where he had gone. ‘Phony doctor Robin Sackmann has finally been arrested by the law enforcement. He claimed that he had the cure for a rare overgrowth disease, and now is being charged for fraud and homicide. Meanwhile scientists had proved that such a disease is still highly lethal and incurable...’

I felt like I was the joke of the year all of a sudden, and hope was all gone.

‘Curse you, doctor.’

The New Weapon for Bullying

Edmund Chan 6B

Good afternoon, teachers and students. Have you ever witnessed anyone being bullied in school or in the playground? If you have, you will definitely think it is unacceptable and horrible, right? However, the bullying problem is getting worse because bullies have found a new weapon, which is even more malicious and it is inescapable. It is known as cyber-bullying.

What is cyber-bullying? It simply means any form of bullying that happens on the Internet. It can be demonstrated in ways more than you can imagine: prank calling; texting; passing on messages that may insult others, posting photos or secretly filmed videos which may be offensive. All these actions contain the same intention: to hurt others. If we do not do something to halt its propagation, it is no doubt that with the rapid development of technologies, the problem of cyber-bullying will bring out more disastrous effects.

Why do I say so? This is because cyber-bullying is even more destructive than physical bullying. Since it is occurring on the Internet, vicious comments, unflattering photos or personal information can reach a wide audience at lightning speed while the culprit can often remain anonymous. Besides, though cyber-bullying will not harm victims physically, it can affect people’s psychological development which may take a long time for the victims to recover. Victims of cyber-bullying can develop serious depression and anxiety. Some of them may have low self-esteem or even become too afraid to talk to others.

To tackle this problem, I suggest students who are being cyber-bullied must stand up to these bullies. There is no use hiding yourself. The longer you suffer in silence, the
more pain you will have to endure.

In addition, you should be aware of what you post and say on the Internet. Most teenagers like disseminating messages, photos and videos and posting comments just for fun, but others may take it as offensive and feel insulted. So it is crucial for us to think twice and respect others’ people feelings when we do anything online.

Cyber-bullying can make people’s lives a misery and may even ruin one’s life as we have all heard about victims committing suicide. This inconsiderate action should not be tolerated in silence. As the saying goes, ‘Treat others the way you want to be treated’. We should all think more of others and stop such irresponsible actions. Thank you.

The Ocean Park Animal Ambassadors - More than Amusement
Joshua Kwok 6B

“Have you ever visited Ocean Park?” Not a single answer would be negative when any Hong Konger is asked the above question. Bringing joy and fun to Hong Kong since 1977, Ocean Park appeals to visitors of all generations and nationalities – not only is it Hong Kong’s local amusement park, but also represents the uniqueness of the Pearl of the Orient. While Ocean Park is enshrined in the collective memory and pride of Hong Kong, it is of utmost essence that its Animal Ambassadors represent the unique characteristics of Hong Kongers — so what are these distinctive features that these adorable animals should possess?

Among all types of values and beliefs harboured by Hong Kongers, the Lion Rock Spirit can without doubt arouse the deepest echo in the hearts of many. Indeed, Hong Kong could always overcome various plights with the virtue of unity and perseverance in the bad old days – be it the financial turmoil or SARS, that devastatingly contagious disease. The mutual care and sincere cooperation of the Lion Rock Spirit can be best embodied by the gregarious dolphins, the representative of exotic animals.

One may wonder — how is the tough and dogged Lion Rock Spirit related to these smiley and friendly marine creatures? As a matter of fact, dolphins all over the world are going through a calamity far more atrocious than any economic tsunami or debt crisis: the threat of extinction. Nonetheless, with the instinct of herd collaboration, with the inborn intelligence, with the altruistic nature to put community benefit as priority, dolphins have managed to endure countless hardships and survive, despite the polluted waters distorted by artificial noises and pests. Isn’t
Apart from the Lion Rock Spirit, dolphins can also remind Hong Kongers of the significance of harmony between man and nature. This serves more than a traditional Taoist concept to remind humans to respect nature and the environment; in fact, Hong Kongers should pay heed to the story of dolphins and reflect upon our development projects: urban development with economics in command has cultivated Hong Kong into yet a more prosperous metropolis – at the expense of, sadly, the natural environment, the habitats of animals. It is high time Hong Kong slowed down the pace of development and pondered the responsibility of mankind of the conservation of nature and all its species – our neighbours and co-inhabitants on this green Earth.

Another Ambassador is a mongrel domestic dog. Apparently, the mongrels are not exceptionally appealing – they are by no means as cute as purebreds. Yet, by their shining and radiant nature, the mongrels can easily excel over other domestic pets and therefore makes a strong case for representing Ocean Park and Hong Kong.

That dogs are loyal is firmly carved on the mind of many. Similarly, Hong Kongers never give up their fidelity to their beliefs and conscience: no one can forget how a myriad of enraged citizens voluntarily joined the demonstration march to voice their discontent and opposition to the enactment of the Article 23; no one can deny how countless thousands of dollars were pooled by Hong Kongers from all walks of life for the sake of the victims’ aid in the Sichuan earthquake; no one can reject the history of Hong Kong fighting for democracy and freedom throughout all these years. The determination of Hong Kongers is plainly depicted by the loyal friends of human.

What distinguishes mongrels from other breeds of dogs is their vigorous vitality. One does not need to be a zoologist to perceive the fact that mongrels, inheriting the best qualities from different breeds of dogs, have generally better health and high immunity to sicknesses. Albeit falling ill, mongrels can often speedily recover. Therefore, little imagination is needed to association mongrels’ life force with Hong Kongers’ resilience. Economic restructure, political reform, social unrest and many other challenges encountered in Hong Kong only facilitated the further prospering development of the city. Like the philosophical quote goes, “What does not kill you, makes you stronger” – and so it is with the numerous times Hong Kong has rebounded.

With the values implied, the Animal Ambassadors – dolphins and mongrels – can do even more than commercial promotion of Ocean Park and Hong Kong. They shall rouse the soul of our people, to review our past deeds, to reminisce about our forgotten potentials and to resurrect our virtues in actions. Let us embrace the Animal Ambassadors and learn amid the fun!
I woke up this morning and discovered I was eight feet tall.

‘I’m not sure whether you should be considered one of us,’ Grumpy muttered and frowned.

Sitting down, I hugged my legs tensely, devoting all my efforts to reminiscing anything extraordinary I did or bumped into last evening. For twenty years I had been merely two feet tall, what caused my unanticipated physical change?

‘Think positive!’ Happy yelled perkily, gobbling down yet another spoon of cereal, ‘Don’t you think it’s a miracle that we have such a tall boy in our family? I guess I’ll scribble a note to inform uncle Darry about Dopey’s astonishing growth!’

A dainty melody streamed on the air. Snowy returned with a basket of fragrant flowers and mushrooms, springing and dancing, while my other four brothers were strolling and chatting.

‘Dopey!’ Snowy yelled with surprise. Dropping her basket, she approached me, with a pair of almond-shaped eyes full of bewilderment.

‘What’s wrong? Are you sick?’

‘Oh my God!’ This was definitely the most jaw-dropping piece of news to be spread in our family.

‘Hey!’ Doc yelled. It seemed that an idea had popped into his head, ‘Was it the blue mushroom you ate last night?’

‘The blue mushroom? The one Snowy picked from the woods?’ Sneezy suggested.

‘Dopey! I’m so sorry!’ Her pale hands were covering her mouth. Snowy’s face was twisted with guilt. Tears were gathering under her long and delicate eyelashes.

Noises emerged at my back. I turned round, only to see Snowy with red-rimmed eyes.

‘I’m so…’ she mumbled.

‘It’s alright,’ I heard my raucous voice comforting her, ‘at least I’m now too enormous to be neglected.’

‘I wouldn’t have let you taste the mushroom if I had foreseen the consequence.’

‘Wait! Would there be another type of mushroom that makes me shrink? I remember once Doc had eaten a green fruit that made his nose grow so long that he couldn’t balance. Later he discovered a purple one on the same tree and it made his nose return to normal.’

‘Dopey,’ Snowy smiled, her oval face as sweet as honey, ‘to be frank, now you look so different…so handsome, even though you’re a bit too tall…’ she ended shyly.

I could feel myself blushing, ‘Thanks, I still want to be a dwarf, though.’

From here, we set off in search of the ‘healing’ mushroom. We almost turned the forest upside down, but to no avail. In the end we surrendered, pacing home under the last streams of sunlight before it got dark.

‘So what will you do if you stay like this for your entire life?’ Snowy prudently formulated her question.
‘Well, although I cannot be called a “dwarf” anymore, I still have a sense of belonging to my family, and I am an still one of the seven dwarfs here. What’s more, I’m still your good friend.’ I tried to give her my friendliest smile.

‘You two are finally home!’ Doc screamed in the doorway.

‘Let’s have supper in the garden. Hey Dopey! This afternoon while you’re away, we made you a new bed. Later we’ll have our cottage renovated and reconstructed little by little, then you’ll be able to enter it without needing to bow and squeeze!’ Happy announced gleefully, distributing the utensils on the table.

‘Happy! That’s nice and benign of all of you!’ Snowy chuckled innocently and whole-heartily. She took my lines.

‘So! Let’s get it started!’ Grumpy cautiously placed the dishes, ‘and cheers!’ Drinking the homemade juice, I was touched by what my brothers had done for me. Snowy was looking at me, grinning.

Perhaps it’s not that despondent to be an eight-feet tall dwarf.

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Speech – World Poverty
Kelvin Hung 6B

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming. I am honored to have an opportunity to give a speech here. What I would like to talk about today is world poverty. Before we start, we must clearly understand what poverty really is.

Sad but true, as Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city, Hong Kongers always interpret poverty as the lack of money to buy labeled goods, trendy clothes or the latest electronic devices. However, if we take a closer look at the people living in third world countries like Ethiopia, Congo and Kenya, to name but a few, we will realize that poverty is living under the poverty line. In other words, that means living on a daily income less than US$ 2. Can you imagine a life with only US$ 2 a day? The reasons for poverty in third world countries are as follows:

Firstly, the lack of natural resources hinders the development of third world countries. Just take Ethiopia as an example. With the absence of funds and sound human resources, Ethiopia is unable to develop its local manufacturing industry and so only depends on agriculture. However, the hot weather and the low rainfall make it difficult to farm. How can a country relying on agriculture be well-developed or self-contained when the natural conditions are harsh? That’s why people in third world countries are in penury.

Another reason conducive to poverty in third world countries is debt. Craving funds for development desperately, third world countries always turn to international organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for loans. These organizations, which mostly consist of affluent countries, lend them money at a high interest. Yet, returning the interest is already out of the capacity of the
developing countries. Consequently, they will need to borrow money from the world organizations again when their debts are due and are thus trapped in the vicious circle of debt. It’s no wonder why so much money has been poured into third world countries but they remain poverty-stricken.

Although it is formidable to uproot poverty in third world countries, with your help we can definitely ameliorate the current deplorable situation.

In the short term, we can inject monetary aid into the third world countries in order to improve the lives of the people. These funds can be used on building infrastructure like schools and transportation network. Such programs can help to train sound human resources and attract investments. With sufficient funds and quality human resources, these countries no longer need to rely solely on agriculture. The lack of natural resources would no longer hamper their development. Eventually, they may develop their own value-added industries, be involved in world trade and have the opportunity to get rid of poverty.

In the long run, a fund can be set up to disburse loans at a low interest to those impoverished countries. This will allow them to improve their local economy. The loans can help them to further develop their high value-added industries so as to be more competitive in the global market. Once they can stand on their own feet, they will be able to break free from the shackles of poverty.

So if you want to help the impoverished, please generously make a donation. With only 5 dollars a day, you can send a child to primary school; with only 5 dollars a day, you can help to build a highway; and with only 5 dollars a day, you can help a thousand locals to find jobs.

To combat world poverty, persistence is of utmost importance. Rome was not built in one day. If you want to eradicate world poverty, from now on, support and contribute to us. Thank you.

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A New Weapon on The Internet

Lau Wing Yan 6B

Good morning, teachers and students. Have you ever been bullied? Have you ever bullied someone? If no, congratulations! If yes, I would like to know what you are thinking when you are being bullied or bullying someone. Honestly, bullying is not a new problem in school. But what makes the situation worse is that the bullies have found a new type of weapon: the Internet. And we call this weapon cyber-bullying.

Let me explain what cyber bullying is. Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic communication devices or technology equipment. The most common examples of cyber-bullying are sending messages that may upset others, leaving offensive or negative comments and uploading embarrassing photos and videos to the web. Although you may think doing these things is just for fun, actually cyber-bullying does harm to the victims.

First, the impacts on the victims can be very serious. Cyber-bullying, unlike traditional school bullying, can happen any time. Besides, all these embarrassing photos, videos and comments can reach a wide audience in just a few seconds. In addition, other netizens may add nasty comments and victims thus become targets of other bullies. Victims may as a result be under immense pressure. For instance, some years ago, a video of a South Korean undergraduate refusing to clean up her dog’s mess was posted on the Internet with her identity revealed soon. She finally could not bear the public humiliation and withdrew from university.
Second, the people who have been cyber-bullied may be afraid to meet friends and go online. This will eventually affect their interpersonal relationship and daily life. They may become introverted. Some may even lose quality sleep and thus be in a terrible mental state. Many researches have shown that teenagers who are being cyber-bullied are more likely to have lower self-esteem and more health problems. In more serious cases, they may suffer from depression or even commit suicide.

In order not to become the targets of cyber-bullies, here are some suggestions for you all. Never pay attention to what cyber-bullies are doing. Checking everyday what bullying messages are on the Internet is of no use to the situation. Rather you should immediately inform your teachers and parents about the cyber-bullying. Do not try to cover the truth because you are not able to tackle the problem yourself.

Moreover, if you know anyone who is being bullied, please help him/her. Never think that the bullies have no malicious intent and they are just doing it for fun. As I have said before, the consequences can be disastrous. All of you should think twice before leaving any messages or uploading any photos and videos to the net.

As the problem of cyber-bullying is getting more prevalent nowadays, if immediate action is not taken, then more teenagers, or even you, will become the next victims. We need to work hard in hand to combat cyber-bullies. We should never be afraid to face them. Take action now if you are a victim or if you know anyone who is being cyber-bullied. Thank you for listening!

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What is a Right School?

Adian Chan 6C

Dear Sir/Madam,

In the old days, people committed suicide because of the adversities in their careers and their lives, namely, they went bankrupt or their beloved one died. Nowadays, a man may threaten others that he is going to commit suicide only on the basis that his child was not accepted by an elite English-medium Instruction (EMI) school. It may be ludicrous to some people. Yet, it has happened recently. The general public is now under the hallucination that the language medium of a school is of utmost importance. They mostly agree that EMI schools as the ‘right schools’ and they affect a student’s life chances profoundly. However, is this the case? As I am not convinced by the aforementioned beliefs, I am writing to express my points of view on the issue.

The general perception of a right school is that it should be an EMI school. Students from an EMI school can speak seemingly perfect English which may even startle a native speaker, while students from a Chinese medium of Instruction (CMI) school can barely utter a word, not even ‘thanks’, in front of a foreigner because of their lack of confidence. Therefore, EMI schools, which give children high language ability and confidence, are hailed as the right school. It may be justified at the first glimpse but is it in fact real? The answer is negative. Students, from EMI schools can beyond doubt be trained as confident, fluent in languages, critical and all-rounded. Meanwhile, CMI schools do the same to sharpen the competitive edges of their students. By viewing the legislators and officials in the government, there are a lot of celebrities who studied in CMI schools, say, Leung Kwok-hung and Chan Hak-keung. Businessmen that communicate with foreigners are not necessarily EMI schools’ alumni too. Therefore, does the myth that a right school should be an EMI school still appeal to us? Or is the myth only polarizing our society and even urging a father to commit a ridiculous act? The answer is obvious.
So now, a question is prompted – what is a right school if the language medium is not the key factor? How can we judge? In my opinion, even if a school is subjective and arguable, some criteria may still be offered as reference.

Imagine you have a son now, who is surprisingly talented in the area of music. He can play the piano pieces heard in the television almost instantly, making your jaw drop. He can deliver the feeling of the pieces of Liszt at seven, while other youngsters who learned the piano for ages are still struggling to do so. Will you send him to a school which emphasizes on athletics? No. You will want to get him in schools which focus on music and let him be surrounded by a sea of people who are also talented, despite everything, not to mention the language medium. What is conveyed in the scenario is that a right school should be ability-oriented. It should fit the strengths and abilities of students. Therefore, a student’s strengths can be continuously enhanced and developed, resulting in a more fabulous future for them.

A right school should as well fit the personality of a student. Let us say children who are creative and always think out of the box enter a school which stresses discipline. Children who are timid and tender enter a school in which most students are aggressive and arrogant. Children who are diligent get into a Band 3 school. What will happen? Either those children fail to adapt to the school or they are assimilated. Who wants their children’s unique personality to be washed away? Who wants their children to learn uncomfortably just because their personality does not fit the characteristics of the school? Nobody. Making sure that the characteristics of a school go well with students is of utmost essence as it ensures that it is a right school for them. Their strengths can be developed and their competitive edges can be sharpened.

Yet, the life chances of a student do not solely depend on a right school. What a right school offers them is limited, while what their character will contribute is infinite. How character works will be presented with the help of a rocket as an example in the following.

A rocket needs a large amount of fuel to keep flying. A person requires persistence to succeed similarly. A rocket faces the force of gravity and air resistance when trying to get into the space. It is the same as students, confronting difficulties and obstacles during their journey to succeed. The fuel, symbolizing their strong mind, fortifies them to keep going, in spite of all the hindrances. Therefore, persistence is the core to success.

The material of a rocket also matters. A rocket manufactured of titanium can withstand the heat generated when flying, while a rocket made of iron will melt. The material symbolizes how steadfast they hold their principles. Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, held his principle that Apple products should be innovative yet simple. Facing challenges that the complexity of Microsoft’s computers success, Steve Jobs still gripped firmly on his principle, which eventually led to the success of Apple products as Apple has become the largest company in the world. This demonstrates that to stick to principles gives students more life chances.

Without the sophisticated design, a rocket cannot be launched. Equally, without careful planning and thorough preparations, students cannot reach the goal of success. To be cautious and make anticipation of the worst-case scenario can protect students from easily yielding in bad situations. It paves the road for their success.

A right school gives us a way but not the only way for more life chances. Students, equipped as a rocket, which flies themselves to the universe of success, will have a more colorful future. Therefore, when a father threatens to kill himself because of the failure of his son being admitted to an elite school again, his son can tell him, ‘Though I lack an elite school education, I’ve acquired a rocket to bring me to the stars!’

Yours faithfully,
Aidan Chau
Advice from Dr. Solve-It
Crystal Yu 6C

Dear Shelly,

Having read your letter, I understand that you are not confident enough to build up an image, a stylish image for yourself. Also, you cannot harness the tactics of mix and match and are being tricked by marketing strategies of salesperson. Your friends’ pressure on you brought forth worries, right? Dr. Solve-It is here to give you a helping hand!

Fashion is not just about wearing nice clothes or even accessories. Without pants that suit your shape, it is meaningless; without the cutting to highlight your attractiveness, the t-shirt isn't worth buying; without suitable mix and match, accessories can be a waste.

Always remember the main fashion tips are the 3Ss.

The first S is for ‘Suit’. The first step to pick the clothes that suit you is to understand your body. People with broad shoulders are suggested to wear round-necked vest to flatter the asset. Skinny jeans can perfectly describe the outline of long legs. By understanding features of different clothing, you can pick up what goes well on you.

The second S is for ‘Select’. Bare in mind, there is no point to follow what the salesperson said, which they use to take advantage of customers. No matter your friend or the shopkeepers, what they give is just advice – meaning that you have your own decision to make. Your friend wants to give you some advice, you can take it but don’t get self-abased. By absorbing them, you want to establish your choices, clearly and consciously. Shop assistants never ever say that clothes make you look bad and clumsy. They know what you are matching. It is not necessary to spend money on items that highlight your failure of dress stylishly.

To avoid making the wrong fashion choice - I know you have got insufficient confidence to persuade yourself about your taste. You want to bring friends along while shopping, it is encouraging! Seeing how your friends’ view contradicts with the opinions of a salesperson can make you more decisive.

The third S stands for ‘Style’. My belief is that everyone can be beautiful, attractive and charming, so can you! You want to wear clothes for comfort but are also in style. For what colours or patterns you love, you can define your own style by purchasing items that complement. And to unpuzzle your dress-sense further, remember a plain t-shirt is always nice with jeans, as well as floral patterns, but avoid putting two floral materials together for both the top and bottom. It will make you look like wallpaper! It is advisable to check out more mix-and-match tips on my website.

Last, don’t try to follow suit! It is good to take a look at celebrities’ outfits, but exploring what really fits you is the bottom line at the end of the day. I hope you can make use of the above notes and hit the stores! You are always welcome to send me your photos for further advice.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Solve-It
Homeschooling is a Better Choice over Formal School Education

Hosanna Wong 6C

8th September, 2012

Dear Editor,

Recently, the issue of a 17-year-old homeschooled girl enrolling in the Harvard University has made the headline. This followed the case in which a homeschooled youngster won an international piano competition. In fact, the success of homeschooled kids is not uncommon in European countries nowadays. As this phenomenon has become more commonplace, I am writing to draw the public’s attention to this unique form of education. Homeschooling is a style of education in which children do not need to go to school and their parents use resources at home or in society to educate their children. From a recent survey, there are more than 200,000 homeschooling families in the USA. What, indeed, is causing these parents to choose homeschooling?

Undoubtedly, the drawbacks of school education lead to the choice of homeschooling. For ages, schools have been condemned for being too competitive and exam-oriented. Schools only acknowledge students’ outstanding performance in exams. That is why students are exposed to great academic pressure and most of them have to burn the midnight oil at the expense of their physical health. It is beyond doubt that homeschooling can provide a more flexible schedule for children as well as an appropriate amount of homework, which help children to strike a balance between learning and relaxation.

Speaking of which, schools are often blamed for their spoon-feeding pedagogy. Schools are like factories that churn out moulded products. Some people also claimed that schools would totally stymie creativity and individuality. Undoubtedly, homeschooling allows tutors to teach children according to their aptitude. Children can choose what they really want to learn and this will contribute to their high motivation to learn. A recent survey also revealed the fact that homeschooled children performed much better in the SAT test than students attending schools in the USA. Obviously, homeschooling can help children to boost their motivation to learn so their results can outshine those of students from schools.

What is more, in contradiction to school education, homeschooled kids can have more time to learn how to be independent. Traditional schools demand students to spend much time on their schoolwork and that would hinder their personal development. In fact, the phenomenon of “Kong Kids” nowadays can also be attributed to the heavy burden of schoolwork, because of which parents do not require their children to do any housework. In contrast, homeschooling provides much more life experience for children to learn how to be independent and take care of themselves so they do not need to rely on their parents.

While some people frown upon homeschooling. They pointed out that homeschooled children lack socialization and criticized that homeschooled parents are actually undermining the importance of children’s skills to communicate with people. Indeed, homeschooling only provides a platform for children to communicate with their parents and siblings, which is not enough for a growing child to build his/her interpersonal skills. Children who lack communication skills might become self-centered and may not know how to cooperate with others when they grow up.

In addition, the role of parents in homeschooling is also a problem to be concerned about. Parents are “teachers” as far as homeschooling is concerned, but at the same time, they also need to take their children in hand and to control their discipline during lessons. Unavoidably, there will always be role confusion. In a recent interview, a homeschooled mother conceded that she had encountered
difficulties communicating with her son during lessons and they had even had quarrels.

It goes without saying that formal school education also has its weaknesses and this needs to be rectified. First of all, the government should reduce the contact time of school education. The overly-long school hours will lie in the way of children’s physical and mental development, as well as their relationships with their families. When school education is cut from a whole day to a half day, it is believed that children can have a more balanced life. On the other hand, schools should also put more emphasis on students’ mental development, for example, to incorporate life education into the main curriculum, not just as a subordinate subject. Additionally, reducing the number of exams and tests to relieve students’ pressure is also within the capacity of schools. For instance, to monitor and evaluate students’ progress, schools could reduce the term tests from two to one.

All in all, it is certain that homeschooling has its pros and cons. There is no doubt that students need to be taught according to their own aptitude, yet communication and interpersonal skills are of utmost importance to a growing child. Children are our major pillars for the future. I am sure that the education system can be more complimentary and commendable, once the government, parents and students work hand in hand to modify this flawed institution. With a distinct destination and cooperation, there is little effort needed to imagine how wonderful our future pillars will be.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong

World Poverty – Is There an Answer?
Ophelia Lin 6C

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen,

What’s the world’s most imminent and challenging issue right now? Is it a financial crisis or wars? Probably neither. The answer is world poverty – it has always been a pressing problem of global concern as nearly one in every six people worldwide is in penury. Why does this happen? Should the poor be blamed for their own predicament? Have they been lazy and therefore are solely responsible for their plight? The deplorable facts are that less-developed countries are facing overpopulation, starvation, lack of education and exploitation.

In every 3.6 seconds, one person dies of hunger, and in every 20 seconds, a child in Africa dies due to vaccine-preventable diseases. It seems like we are impotent in putting a halt to the increasing death rate. But have you ever thought that you could give them a helping hand; give the poverty-stricken nations a brighter future and give the desperate children hope? Here is a chance for you to share your blessing as a global citizen with the less fortunate ones.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to work, to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing and medical care.” As a charitable organization, we strive to provide for the basic needs of the impoverished as a safety net. Regarding water resources, we have voluntary engineers to help the less-developed countries and remote villages to build wells. We believe the construction of a safety water supply system can guarantee people’s access to clean water and thus safeguard their health.

Besides water, food is another aspect of utmost importance. Almost US$3 million is spent on food aid annually with our organization being the official food aid
agency for Mozambique. You might ask, will this lead to an over-reliance on relief food? My answer is Yes - there is a possibility that food aid may be crippled with fundamental flaws. However, we cannot turn a blind eye to the devastating starvation on the other side of the globe until we arrive at a perfect means to tackle poverty. Although food aid may have its downside, we cannot deny that it helps to alleviate starvation and malnutrition. Therefore, there is always a need to develop a safety net for the poor on food and water.

Apart from the relief measures, we are also working on long-term projects to help establish the local economy of the poverty-stricken countries. For over ten years, we have strived to equip the poor with sustainable means of subsistence in lieu of handouts, be it subsidies on fertilizers, or training on sustainable and environmentally-friendly cultivation methods. We believe this can increase the yield and help them revive their agricultural industry. With the help of international fair trade organizations, the local farmers earn more reasonable profits for their agricultural products. If you want to help the local farmers stand on their own feet, please buy fair trade products and donate to support our work to give them a chance to self-reliance.

What's more, education enhances lives. That's why we insist on proper education in a bid to end cycles of poverty. We believe education is the solution to poverty. Your donations can help build infrastructure, hire teachers and empower children with knowledge so they are capable of joining the workforce and help to improve their own country.

All in all, lives in penury are hanging by a thread. We hold the future for 925 million people in our hands. We should not hold back when we have surplus to give. Action speaks louder than words - let’s reach out and help the poor to overcome their hardship and end poverty. We need your help to fight world poverty and save lives.

Thank you!

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Strike the Balance as You Box!

Kenny Mok 6D

Dear Betty,

I’m so sorry that I have not written you a letter for such a while. But life of a F6 student is just too demanding. I seldom have a free night from the days full of homework and tests to write you a letter, so please forgive me.

I’ve heard that you are going to join a boxing club for your extracurricular activity. How refreshing it is for you to go exercising (because you have mentioned that you are not enthusiastic in sports!) Though there might be many advantages, I still think that you have to take the drawbacks of participating in boxing into consideration, as your mum might be concerned about it.

The first unfavorable aspect of boxing is that you may get hurt while training. You should know that there are many physical movements in boxing, like punching, kicking, throwing, etc. There is a case a few years ago which was related to the danger of boxing: three years ago, a man suddenly received a heavy head punch while he was practicing and fell down. He was sent to hospital immediately. Unfortunately, he died eventually after being sent to hospital. I’m not threatening you, but you have to be aware that it is very easy to get hurt in boxing if you are not quick enough to react.

Besides, participating in boxing might shorten your study time. It is not easy to keep a balance between studies and extracurricular activities. Many people have put too much time into the latter (but that’s not their fault at all, the extracurricular activities are usually much more interesting than studies, who can oppose this?) Lamentably, most of them also can’t do well in their academic subjects. As a consequence, they can’t get satisfying results in the public exam. So, if you can’t have a good balance between studies and boxing, you have to think deeply about whether or not you should start boxing.
Maybe you’d say that you can manage your time so your academic results would not be affected. But Betty, boxing is a very energy-consuming physical activity. You will definitely feel exhausted on the day after you go boxing. When you are exhausted at school, you’ll find that it is quite hard for you to concentrate during the lessons. Though you might have lots of time after school for your revision, the key points and main terms of the books are usually mentioned by teacher in the lesson. If you lose concentration in the lesson, it is not easy for you to remember the essential part of the subject.

If you still persist in taking up boxing after considering all the factors, I’ll have some suggestions for you to persuade your mum so as to let her allow you to go boxing.

The most crucial part for you to persuade your mum to allow you to go boxing is to promise yourself to her that your average academic marks won’t drop after taking part in boxing. Your mum cares about your studies so much that she is worried about you abandoning your studies and only focusing on boxing. But if you can show her that you are able to strike a balance between studies and boxing, her worry will be relieved, and she may agree that you should continue boxing.

On top of striking a balance between studies and boxing, you must also ensure your safety. As I mentioned before, another problem is to stay safe and sound. Your mum is worried about you getting hurt during a training session. You can protect yourself by wearing safety gear, warming up beforehand and cooling down after practice. If you can assure your mum that you will do everything to minimize the risks of getting injured, I believe that it is much easier to persuade her to concur on your passion for boxing.

It’s time to stop here, I’m so sorry to tell you that I still have some homework to finish. Don’t forget to drop me a few lines and tell me how the thing is going!

Always,
Kenny

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**People in the 21st Century should Avoid Eating Meat**

Kevin Lee 6D

According to Oxford Dictionary, ‘avoid’ means ‘to prevent something bad from happening’. The opposition has argued, that eating meat, by itself, does no harm, and is essential to health as humans are omnivores. Here our dear opposition is quite misinformed. I think we agree that eating meat is not something bad – a simple motion it would be, then. But our team believes this is not what the motion is about. When someone tells you to ‘avoid drinking’, he actually means ‘don’t drink too much alcohol or you’ll get a headache’. As we can see, the word ‘avoid’ here implies two important factors: the lack of moderation and the consequences it brings about. And these two seem to be the very things 21st century people are nearly oblivious to.

Our population has boomed to about twice that of a few decades ago, yet the number of fish we catch has quadrupled. The International Commission of Fisheries and Conservation has already warned that at this rate the ocean would be almost devoid of fish by 2040. On the other hand, cattle ranching is demolishing rainforests all around the world at almost two football fields every second. That’s about the area of 1000 football fields since we began this debate. Do you even have any idea how wasteful producing meat is? If one unit of land can produce one kilogram of rice, you would need about 12 units of land to plant grass for cattle! That was 12kg of rice that would originally have fed more then 12 times the number of people. Even worse, a lot of the meat is then exported to developed countries such as the US, where food wastage is rampant.

This leads to the next point – eating meat is really not justifiable, in today’s
world where a food crisis is imminent and the distribution of food is uneven. By avoiding meat we conserve resources and feed more mouths, and farmers in developing countries can have a chance to farm for their livings. Biology tells us that for every level of the food chain, less than 10% of energy is conserved. So it is highly uneconomical for humans to consume meat.

Furthermore, humans can actually obtain all the nutrients needed from plants. There are millions of vegetarians around the world who eat only vegetables and fruit and are perfectly healthy, or even healthier than most people who eat meat. Meat frequently contains mono-saturated fatty acids, which lead to a higher rate of coronary heart disease as they build up like a plague inside blood vessels. Meat is also much harder to digest than fruits and vegetables and digesting it puts strain on the pancreas and liver. Excessive meat increases blood pressure, and in Chinese medicine terminology, causes an imbalance in the ‘Chi’ as it adds much ‘fire’.

As we now see, eating meat is not essential, not even healthy, and sometimes downright harmful for people around the world. Our third speaker, Chris, will go on and elaborate on how eating meat is unethical and the great injustices of the meat industry.

Finally, the bible stated that we humans are entrusted with the task of managing and governing over the earth. We had better be more responsible with our actions. It is simply wrong for a person in the 21st century to eat meat, as I have illustrated before, and today’s motion must stand.

Thank you.

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**Does National Education Equal Brainwashing**

**Hong Kong’s New Generation?**

Lutus Lee 6D

Whether we should implement the National Education in the Hong Kong primary school syllabus has been contradictory among various parties and aroused robust discussion amid citizens in Hong Kong. Let me briefly introduce the objectives of the National Education first. Via National Education, Hong Kong’s new generations can develop a sense of belonging to the motherland, which enhances the bond among the Chinese people. Moreover, it manages to establish national harmony, identity and unity among individuals by acquiring and admiring the Chinese culture. However, there are always two sides to a coin. While harmony, identity and unity are likely to improve the prestige and image of our country, there are also criticisms pointing at the National Education for actually being a brainwashing strategy committed by the Hong Kong government based on the current Chief Executive, C.Y. Leung’s allegedly communist background. In this case, I agree that to a larger extent National Education is equivalent to brainwashing.

Every four years, we can see Chinese athletes plundering medals and breaking records at the Olympic Games, we can see China’s sophisticated military arsenal in the extravagant National Day ceremony parade, and also in its booming economic development and aggressive territorial expansion in recent years. These are all unquestionably positive sides of China. However, none of these can obscure the challenges which the Chinese government is dealing with, like the ageing population which has begun to burden the younger generation who were raised under the one-child policy. Not to mention the great wealth disparity among the Chinese citizens. Apart from appreciating our country’s achievements, it is also vital to know the difficulties our motherland is currently encountering. Apparently, the National
Education instructions approved by the government are biased to the good sides of China, and are intentionally tempting people to accept more about our motherland. But accepting and adoring do not mean that we are helping to solve the ongoing problems in modern China. It is simply not a good way to show our patriotism, and is definitely brainwashing by instilling only the positive sides of China to Hong Kong’s future generations.

Thinking in different points of view is an important skill for us nowadays because we have to be objective and judge concepts and actions rationally with reasonable evidence. This is even being advocated in the Liberal Studies which symbolizes a free thinking status. However, National Education appears to be in conflict with this skill. According to the National Education handbook, introspection should be made if a student can not feel or be inspired by the greatness of the communist party in the Chinese government, which is doubtlessly a straight infusion to the students’ minds, not allowing them to cultivate critical thinking against the central government. When time goes by, Hong Kong’s new generations’ thinking will be imbued with an irrational sense of love and support towards the Chinese government. What could be more appropriate than to describe National Education as “brainwashing”?

National harmony is advocated in National Education. Harmony itself should be positive in ideal circumstances, but it is not always like that. Just take a look at modern China, where things are concealed and the media is strictly controlled by the government (for it is always good news that there is no bad news). A Chinese-style harmony is applied here. Any news that harms the image of the government is sealed, and all activists who speak against the government are somehow silenced. Consequently, the Chinese government in the people’s eyes is always perfect, or say the citizens themselves who know that they had better obey or misfortune will fall upon them. No dissidences, no struggles, no dissatisfactions, and life becomes monotonous, and so will be Hong Kong’s fate.

By and large, different aspects featured in National Education revealed the government’s artifice. National Education is merely a brainwashing scheme in disguise.

An Enemy of Mental Health
Carmen Hui 6E

Do you always feel sad, anxious or even hopeless? Have you found yourself losing interest in activities that were once your favourites? Is fatigue haunting you daily as if it will never fade away? If your answer is ‘Yes’ to all three questions above, then you are probably suffering from depression. But don’t get desperate about it – a friend of mine was diagnosed to have been suffering from depression a few months ago, but she has overcome it successfully now.

Stuck in such a fast-paced, highly competitive and dreadfully hectic society coupled with high expectations from our families, it is beyond doubt that we are leading a stressful life. The situation is worse for high school students. In a bid to survive the intimidating public exams, everyone is sparing no effort to prepare for the battle, lest they cannot get a spot in a university and their lives be doomed ever more. From countless past papers to endless homework, not to mention the energy-draining extra-curricular activities to fill up the OLE list, we students hardly have a moment to take a deep breath. Obviously, we are definitely not superhuman, right? All these things will only put us under great pressure every day.

My friend Laura was, unfortunately, one of the poor victims who found herself unable to struggle to stay alive in this terrifying war. She honestly thought she lacked the ability to deal with the public exams; but if she gave up then, by no means would she be able to go to a university and pursue her dream of becoming a successful professional. With tons of work and loads of expectations from the school, her family and all the peers around her, one day she just suddenly felt that she couldn’t carry them all anymore, and she collapsed, psychologically. That’s when depression started to haunt her. Anxiety, worthlessness and hopelessness were written all over her pale
gloomy crybaby with an awfully irritable mood. She also withdrew herself from her social life too; whenever we tried to ask her to hang out with us, she just refused straightaway without any hesitation.

As a dear friend of hers, seeing Laura suffer from depression I was really concerned about her health. Therefore, I decided to give her a hand. I gave her some pamphlets about depression, prompted her to visit the social worker, and even urged her to consult a doctor. At first, she denied the fact that she had this illness and was reluctant to listen to my advice. But after she had gone through those symptoms listed on the pamphlets that I gave her, she eventually accepted it. Having met with the social worker, Laura began to know more about depression and what she should do in order to fight against it. She started to think positively and share her feelings and ideas with her family and friends. Better still, she learned to ask for help when she faced problems that she wouldn’t be able to solve by herself. After months of battle, she finally conquered it and achieved a complete triumph. Right now, the long-lost radiance of Laura has returned once again

Depression has become prevailing these days due to the fact that our stressful lives are jam-packed with myriads of tasks. So if you unfortunately fall victim to this illness, or discover that you are experiencing some of the aforementioned symptoms, don’t freak out – this is not the end of the world. Always remember that the remedy is to stay positive. And of paramount importance, never hesitate to search for help. There must be someone who can offer professional advice, someone who is willing to sit down to listen to your grievances and someone who would love to help you climb over all the obstacles that block your way. Meanwhile, you should learn to relax and put down all the stress and pressure that troubles you. I am sure this will help you fight your depression noticeably.

It is always better late than never. If you are suffering from depression and yet haven’t done anything about it, help yourself now! There is nothing shameful about that; so just go talk to your family and friends and see if they can offer any help. You can also lead a joyful life!

Only Madman would Choose to live in a Metropolis like Hong Kong

Kristy Tsang 6E

That metropolises provide a high concentration of good things and excellent services is an incontestable fact – that’s probably why the prospect of living in a modern city like Hong Kong holds great appeal to many. Yet even so, over the last few years more and more people have been migrating to other countries, causing a brain-drain in Hong Kong. It is hard to resist the conclusion that living in such a prosperous city is just not as good as what they imagine. For me, I would say Hong Kong is far from being an ideal place to live.

Hong Kong is a remarkably efficient city – it’s all about speed living in Hong Kong. Often when there is a hiccup, no matter how minor it is, frustration and anger quickly set in. The MTR would come under fire because of the small cracks in railway lines that led to delays of several minutes; waiters will be blamed if their customers cannot enjoy their meals within ten minutes after their orders. Wherever you look, people are rushing, rushing and rushing. Sometimes I just want to ask why they need to be that fast; people living in France are just fine though they have a much less hectic life. Rarely do people have time to think about their life or appreciate the divine creation of God. Perhaps you will not agree to this kind of lifestyle, but the terrible truth is that you are in no position to resist it – when people around you are rushing and pushing, you can only follow the stream and do the same if you don’t wish to hear murmurings of complaints. In fact, there are only two kinds of people who enjoy living in Hong Kong: 100m runners like Usain Bolt or maniacs.
Apart from the hectic pace, extreme stress also suffocates city dwellers. Although Hong Kong is a small place with an area of only 1,104 km², it now has a population of over 7 million. Little imagination is needed to understand how scarce the resources are. In the face of stiff competition, students strive to get a university offer – they attend tutorial classes every day after school, study until two every night, and even have to squeeze time for extra-curricular activities just because they cannot leave their SLP blank. Tuition places are limited, and so are job opportunities. A university degree is the minimum requirement for you to get a job, but nobody can guarantee you can find a job with a satisfactory pay. Even if you have a well-seeming career, do not yearn for a possibility to slacken off a bit – you can be laid off just because you have made a single mistake. Intangible pressure is thus placed on their shoulders and that’s why city dwellers are more susceptible to mental diseases. According to a research done by the Chinese University, 400 thousands of Hong Kong citizens are now suffering from depression, and the tremendous pressure is believed to be the culprit. In my opinion, the phenomenon is very understandable – the overwhelming workload and stress are enough to drive anyone mad. Don’t you agree?

While many city dwellers work so hard to earn a pittance, the cost of living is ruthlessly high in Hong Kong. Some people say we Hongkongers devote our whole life working for the property developers, which is very sad but true. Owing to the property hegemony, property prices are soaring and it’s virtually impossible for ordinary people to afford a flat on their own. Numerous grass-root citizens are living in caged cubicles or partitioned flats with appalling conditions, but the funny thing is that the rent per feet can be more costly than that of some luxurious apartments. Besides, thanks to the property developers, small shops and enterprises are gradually eliminated and now Hongkongers can only resort to chain stores for expensive goods.

In the countryside, sunshine and fresh air are always easily found. The magnificent natural scenery can dispel all the anxiety and stress in one’s heart. Yet, for city dwellers, these are all luxuries – so ironic, isn’t it? But the fact is that pollution seems inevitable in a cramped city like Hong Kong. Buildings are densely packed, causing inadequate ventilation; vehicles jam the road, emitting black fumes into the atmosphere; skyscrapers blot out the sapphire sky. There’s call from the general public and green groups for the government to protect the natural reserves. But what do you expect the government to do when the land resources in Hong Kong are already at a premium? Somehow the government feels helpless about needing to occupy the Sai Kung Country Park for the extension of landfill. A lack of fresh air and the serious pollution problems surely make Hong Kong an unsatisfactory dwelling place.

Given all the aforementioned problems, there seems to be no merits I can speak of concerning living in a highly developed modern city like Hong Kong. Yet, the funny thing is that I am still living here, and I have never thought of leaving. The reason is simple – Hong Kong is my home, my roots. I love the place, the culture and the people here. Perhaps I’m really a lunatic, so what?
Unpredictable Harm of Cyber-bullying

Judy Chan 6E

Good morning, everyone! I believe that all of you surf the net on a regular basis and enjoy using social websites. However, have you ever impersonated others online? Have you ever teased or intimidated others on social networks? Or have you ever posted others’ photos or information on a website without their consent? I think that some of you, or even many of you, have experienced these before. Frankly speaking, these are all forms of cyber-bullying and should be halted at once.

What comes to your mind when you hear the word ‘cyber-bullying’? Cyber-bullying is different from the traditional bullying. The latter may only occur at school by using verbal or physical abuse but the former is now ever-increasing and most likely takes place off-campus, and includes using fake accounts, threatening or harassing others via electronic communication. Most of the online bullies are anonymous and therefore they are hard to be traced. According to the National Crime Prevention Council, cyber-bullying is defined as ‘when the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.’ You may now murmur: I am one of the victims or I do partake in cyber-bullying. Why are the bullies so brutal and inhumane? How can I escape from the bullies? Before I answer these questions, I would like to share what I have read from a newspaper article recently.

Don’t be shocked when you hear that a youngster, Ryan Halligam, aged only 13, plunged to his death after he was taunted to be gay and insulted incessantly over Instant Messaging. Another teenager, this time a girl, Megan Meier, also aged 13, committed suicide last year. One of her classmates impersonated as a boy who fell in love with her but dumped her after a few days and told her that the world would be better without her. Then, she hanged herself. These two tragedies were unexpected.

Try to imagine that you are one of the victims. Fabricated rumors and scandalous photos of you are splashing across the net but it’s all beyond your control and you become the butt of everyone’s jokes. So what can you do? Nobody wants to lend a hand. Being extremely desperate, a thought of committing suicide may suddenly pop into your head. Therefore cyber-bullying will certainly result in profound consequences and ruin one’s life.

Unanimously, most teens have an unquenchable desire for having a reliable peer group so that they will not feel lonely or isolated and can share their happiness and sadness among their friends. However, victims of cyber-bullying usually have no friends and become loners at school. Hence, they may have lower self-esteem, greater suicidal tendency and a spate of negative emotional responses such as losing a sense of security, becoming despondent and furious and may even suffer from depression and anxiety. What they have gone through will deeply become a lifelong wound in their heart. Under no circumstances should we turn a blind eye to these victims.

Realizing the reasons behind this Web-based phenomenon, instead of standing with folded arms and doing nothing when facing cyber-bullying, I believe all of you should gear up and protect yourself from being a passive victim. Now, here is the code, ‘PASS’. Yes! Cyber-bullying will definitely pass.

‘P’ stands for personal information. You should never reveal your confidential information on the Internet. Keeping it private and protected can prevent others from invading your privacy. So using sophisticated passwords and changing them once a week is of paramount importance.

‘A’ represents adult. Once you find that you have fallen victim to cyber-bullying, you should tell a trusted adult, for example, your parents, teachers or counsellors,
and handle this knotty problem together. I am sure that they will give you handy solutions so as to ameliorate your situation.

‘S’ means to stop. Stop exploring and reading those websites or electronic communication once you find out that you are the target of bullies. You should block those bullies and unfriend them in the social networking websites like Facebook. As a result, there is a lower probability that they can ever harass you again.

The last ‘S’ symbolizes a new start. Although you may feel depressed and frustrated after being bullied, you deserve a chance to better your life and love yourself. I can ensure that your wound will stop aching someday. So why don’t you leave the past behind and start a brand new page in your life? Your families are still loving and accompanying you. It is nonsense for you to waste your life by being stuck in the past.

The problem of cyber-bullying will stop exacerbating once you find the best remedy to curb it. Never try to bully others for fun. Deep in your heart, you know how painful being a victims is. Be caring, compassionate and cordial. Let us take action and end cyber-bullying now. Thank you.

A Swan or a Duck?
Louis Leung 6E

The news about DR Medical Beauty has become the talk of the town. After a beauty treatment went wrong, a few of the women were affected and resulted in not just having side effects but also death. These accidents were splashed across the front page of the newspapers and have triggered much controversy in society.

Students, what is on your mind? Do you agree with people who face risks in the search for physical perfection?

For the proponents of plastic surgery, they think the results of having plastic surgery can boost their self-esteem and self-confidence. It is because plastic surgery changes people’s appearances. They can have their eyes widened, noses slimmed and breast enlarged. Men will become more charming and woman will become more attractive than before. Hence, they will become more confident in meeting new friends and having conversations with the opposite sex. Consequently, they may broaden their social circle.

What is more, plastic surgery can be used in conventional operations. Some women who have very large breasts usually suffer from neck and back pains. Thus breast reduction may curb these symptoms. In addition, some unfortunate victims whose faces are deformed after a crash can be reconstructed. This kind of operation is nothing improper and most people will not think it is unacceptable.
However, the opponents think the high risk of plastic surgery is a point to be considered. Notwithstanding the advances in technology, we can still hear of accidents and news about the side effects of plastic surgery such as temporary bruising, inflammation and soreness. The main culprits of these accidents are the half-trained plastic surgeons. It is common to see people going to beauty clinics instead of hospitals for plastic surgery and other beauty treatments. Some surgeons in beauty clinics are not specialists and they may not have enough plastic surgery training. It is also well-known that beauty clinics in Hong Kong have long been operated haphazardly without supervision. The death of a woman after taking a risky beauty treatment in DR Beauty is a case in point. Therefore, having plastic surgery can be hazardous and results can backfire.

Furthermore, some people who undergo plastic surgery do so just for the purpose of impressing others. Many people think that an attractive appearance can help them in many ways such as getting a job more easily. They haven’t thought about the consequences of making such hasty decisions. Remember, the results of plastic surgery are irreversible.

From my perspective, doing things in moderation is always the motto. Plastic surgery has become a universal phenomenon in the modern era and it is commonplace to find advertisements of plastic surgery everywhere. New surgical techniques are surely making significant contributions to people who are pursing beauty. Besides attaining goals in beauty, plastic surgery can be counterproductive. We must also consider the possibility of the disastrous consequences such as disfigurement and psychological anguish.

Students, what is your answer now? Every coin has two sides. Do you think plastic surgery is turning a duck into a swan or turning a swan into a duck?

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**When the Western meets China: Culture**

Adrian Lam 6F

The West has long been a land of mystery to us, Chinese people. Tracing back both Western and Eastern history, we can see they have had doors closed on each other. Although since the 19th Century, the wind of globalization has been gradually flipping up the veil of the Western people, most of the Chinese can only catch a glimpse of their blurred faces. Fortunately, the Ithaca-Beijing Exchange program I took part in last year gave me a clearer vision behind the veil — the detailed characteristics of Western culture, through which I learnt that the saying ‘Western people look different from Chinese ones’ is more than true, as the former has individualism written on their faces while the latter has collectivism carved on theirs.

In my very first step into Ithaca, America, I have already had my first taste of the contrast of parenting styles, which stems from the different values upheld. When I was to depart at the Beijing International Airport, my mother was determined to put all my textbooks in my already full backpack. My father said to me with his highest order of seriousness, “Son, going to the States won’t get you into the Peking University. DON’T play, always study!” However, my host family was paralyzed with their mouths wide open when I had my eyes locked on my Physics book while waiting for my pieces of luggage. Chester, a seventeen-year-old teen of the family, laughed out loud after an instant of embarrassment.

“Dude you call that a trip? Free yourself from the books!”

“I am applying for universities this year and I must study in Peking University to fulfill my parents’ expectations so…”

“As long as you get into a university you’ll be fine. Why force yourself?”
To my surprise, his parents Mike and Amy nodded in agreement. When we arrived at their place, their sixteen-year-old daughter approached Mike with her test paper asking for his signature. “A seventy... Not bad! Keep it up!” Mike smiled. Seriously, a seventy? My dad would have punched me in my face! However now I no longer feel weird, as generally Westerners adopt relatively permissive parenting styles when weighed on the same balance with Chinese, who usually adopt authoritarian parenting styles. Chinese parents often set stricter requirements and show lower acceptance levels for their children. The driving force for them to push their kids is the mindset of collectivism, they want them to be the very best, especially from an academic perspective. They inherited a traditional cultural mindset, which originated thousands of years ago, that academic experts are paid great respect by the public and bring honour to their entire family, even to ancestors who have passed away. In China, people share both glory and dishonor collectively as a clan, as more people are affected, there is a more significant element of responsibility in parenting styles of Chinese. On the other hand in the Western world where individualism is advocated, honour and defamation is rather a personal matter, which is conducive to the lighter responsibility in their parenting styles. This explains why Westerners are less nervous about children’s achievement as I have observed in Ithaca, especially academic ones.

After I had settled down, Mike drove us to have a dinner at a buffet, and that gave me my second taste of the different values upheld in the West. In the buffet, I followed the Americans by taking my own dish, shopping around and adding anything mouth-watering to me on the dish. I could take and savor anything I liked. However that’s not the case in Chinese restaurants, as known as Cha Lou, where people sit together around a round table and order delicacies using a table as a unit. We than share, enjoy, or sometimes suffer from the orders collectively. In a buffet I need only to take my individual interests into account, whereas in Cha Lou I must bear the interests of the whole clan in mind. Eating, such an everyday and normal action, has, yet, exemplified the enormous dissimilarity of mindsets of collectivism and individualism with perfection.

These were only on my first day to Ithaca. After months spent living together, I managed to identify further ideologies advocated differently by both cultures. Westerners emphasize egalitarianism under the influence of individualism while Chinese stresses hierarchy under their impression of collectivism. One evening Chester held a family meeting regarding his choice of university that I was invited to sit in.

“How about M.I.T.? It sounds good right?” Chester asked.

“Well sure, if you are interested in it. Have you ever thought of Cornell?” replied Mike with his sincere eyes on his son.

“It’s nice but I’m afraid...”

My focus faded out. Memories struck me. When I was having my “family meeting” my father raised his pitch drastically whenever I try to voice my opinion, repeating his cliché “Peking University is the only option!” The dominant and tyrannic nature of the meeting is even more deplorable than the typical Chinese bureaucrats! The difference is signified well. Westerners pay equal level of respect for each individual as they advocate individualism, while Chinese highlight respect for seniority under the culture of hierarchy. In China, under collectivism, clans are considered as units and in each unit, there is a hierarchy of status, where seniorities are prioritized due to the advocacy in filial piety. In other words, hierarchy and egalitarianism are actually derivatives of collectivism and individualism respectively. Therefore we can come to a conclusion that the contrast of hierarchy and egalitarianism is illustrating the contrast of collectivism and individualism.

All in all, I must give credit to the Ithaca-Beijing Exchange Programme which allowed me to catch sight of how Westerners look under their veils. Although they are unlike, their beauty is alike.
iPad – The Magic Wand for Learning

Alex Siu 6F

Microsoft, the dominating giant in the cyber world, had failed year after year trying to downgrade its legendary PC system to produce tablet PCs’ system. Yet, the bulky layout and complicated control were always the curses to its products. Not a single company had succeeded until the artistic genius of informatics, Steve Jobs, introduced the iPad. Base on the revolutionary design of the iPhone, the iPad has given all the possibilities in the iPhone – its mobility, convenience and elegance, surpassing all similar products, and brings the world to a new era of electronic gadgets. Not only can pro-gamers and trend-followers experience fantasies everywhere they go, but students can also make good use of its advantages to let iPads be the turbo-booster for their education.

In the past, when studying crab trees, what could students do? They would probably check it out in a botany book or look it up in a dictionary. But now, with an iPad, students can go outdoors, searching for a crab tree in the Hong Kong Park by comparing trees with the photos in their iPads. They may then use the QRcodes besides the trees provided by the government to obtain the details of the tree. Apart from that, students can feel the texture of the leaves, the roughness of the trunk and the height of the tree. Students are no longer confined to a tiny classroom. Wouldn’t it be thrilling just to envisage all these things? They can interact with the outside world and consolidate their knowledge through their iPads. With the mobility of iPads, educational experiences that have been impossible have now become possible.

What will you do when looking up the word ‘Buckminsterfullerene’ in the dictionary? You search for words starting with ‘B’, then ‘u’ and flip the pages back and forth to find the word. If you are lucky, you may get the word in a few minutes. In most cases, you cannot find the word ‘Buckminsterfullerene’ in a mainstream dictionary! Alternatively, when searching in Google, you can find its meaning within 0.01 seconds! Having an iPad, students no longer have to do the annoying flipping to find the words that are actually not included in the dictionary. They may instantly get access to the knowledge base on the whole world, and nothing can stand in their way of immersing themselves into the exposure of knowledge. When the currency at schools is deemed to be ‘time’, isn’t the iPad saving a precious three minutes for students each time they need to ‘look up the dictionary’?

True, some people in society put the blame on the high cost of iPads. After all, 4000 dollars is not an amount that every family can afford. However, several bodies of research and some foreign experience have proved that the problem can be addressed by lending students iPads that belong to the schools. In the US, the public highschools usually lend expensive textbooks to students, but students must protect the books from any kinds of damage. Similarly, our school can lend iPads to students, which can, at the same time, teach students to be responsible for their own properties. If so, students can receive both academic and mental growth. Isn’t it educational?

As a matter of fact, the disciplinary problem is the true and most thorny enemy to students, parents and teachers. To tackle the problem, 3s are suggested to mitigate the situation. For immediate actions, ‘supervision’ is an essential key to help junior form students to get back on the right track when they are distracted. As young teenagers, it is understandable that they have the desire to be entertained rather than studying. For short-term measures, students should learn ‘self-control’. They should understand that it is impossible for parents and teachers to guide them wherever they are, and they should be responsible for themselves. For long term strategies, students should be educated with a will to aim high at exams and ‘strive’ for the best in learning, in order to eliminate the desire to use their iPads for entertaining purpose.

With the 3s, supervision, self-control and strive, the iPad may be the best invention in the century. This razor-sharp knife should be used as an educational tool to turn a new leaf of students’ learning experience.
Overcrowding – The Main Culprit of Declination in Quality of Life
Rafael Law 6F

In this city of hustle and bustle, everything appears to be a rarity. With a population density of 6,544 people sharing a single square kilometre of land in Hong Kong, public housing is a rarity that numerous senior citizens or people in need are still living in subdivided units or cage cubicles. Public space is a rarity as if you were a salmon swimming upstream or when you are walking in the crowds on the Sai Yeong Choi Street. Even private space is a rarity as you can peep at the girl living next door through your bedroom window – every apartment is too close to each other. Can you guess how disastrous our society will be if there are more and more people in our city competing with us all for these rarities?

Imagine you are cooking a dish, you need to add soya sauce on a steamed fish, but you discovered that the glass bottle is already empty. What you need to do is to open the window in your kitchen and yell to the neighbour living next door, like “Could you please lend me your bottle of soya sauce?” Within seconds, you will receive a “No problem!” from your neighbour. After that, the Mr. Whatever or Mrs. Whatsername will open the window of that apartment and ... pass you the bottle!

Yes, people in Hong Kong are so intimate to the extent that we are literally living “right next to each other”. The buildings in Hong Kong are somehow, peculiarly, constructed like the developers were playing with LEGO – blocks and blocks are tightly packed together. You cannot even feel the weakest breeze when you are standing in the middle of a street as all the skyscrapers standing along the street are surrounding you like a screen. As a matter of fact, buildings with this style are called “walled buildings”. It is ubiquitous in our city, and these buildings are usually named with elegant words like “Palace”, “Hermitage”, and “Imperial”. Not only do these walled buildings spoil the appearance of the urban areas, but also bring damage to our environment. Walled buildings act as a prodigious screens and block the circulation of air in the urban areas, and this causes the Heat Island Effect – the temperature in urban areas being unusually higher than in rural areas. These forms of visual pollution and damage to the environment harm the quality of life in our community.

In addition to the environmental problem, overcrowding also results in a ridiculously large amount of skyscrapers ruining the appearance of our city. It would be easier to understand it by using the analogy that our city is somewhat like a glass. A glass with a fixed volume can only contain an equal volume of water with the container at maximum. If water is continuously poured into the cup, the water is going to spill out. To contain more water with the cup we can only increase the size of it. However, our container has a fixed base area. Therefore, to achieve this with our cup as a three-dimensional object, what we can do is to either extend the z-dimension, which is the height of the cup or increase the density of the liquid water.

Similarly, Hong Kong is notorious for its deplorable lack of land supply. The surge of population will inevitably increase the demand for housing. Under the problem of overpopulation, with the inadequacy of land supply, to contain the “water” flooding in, building residential buildings higher and higher is the only way out. When standing on the streets and beholding the sky above us, we are no different than a frog sitting at the bottom of a well, except that our well is bottomless, since the skyscrapers are way too high.

Apart from physical damage to our quality of lives, overcrowding also causes intangible damages to our society and the quality of life in the community.

There are numerous stakeholders in our city, including government, inhabitants, green groups, and other citizens in the city. Different stakeholders have different
levels of involvement in the city development, and due to different vested interests of stakeholders, disputes often occur among them, which causes social disharmony and, consequently, the quality of life in a community is lowered.

There are often problems led by overcrowding among family members. Similar to my “glass cup metaphor”, with the increase in population, the density of residence will inevitably increase. To put this vague concept in more simpler terms, people are “packed” more tightly with each other. Different potential domestic problems will be raised consequently. In terms of privacy, everyone’s private space will be limited. It will be easier for family members to mistakenly cross the border of others’ private zone, which leads to the infringement of privacy. In terms of equipment, family members have to queue up to use certain furniture or facilities like working desks, computers or even washrooms. Again, in this city of hustle and bustle, this sharing of resources in a family often causes disputes among family members when everyone is in a rush. Both these two factors downgrade the harmony of families, which ultimately damage quality of life in the community.

There are conflicts of interests among citizens in the community. Our social welfare is just like a piece of pizza. No matter how many pieces you attempt to divide it into, the overall size of the pizza will never change. The more serious problem is that unless you buy a bigger pizza, the proportion of each piece of pizza will be reduced. Similarly, under the problem of overpopulation, with the fixed amount of social welfare, the proportion of social welfare for each person will be decreased. That causes a dilemma for the government. Increasing the capital on social welfare will undoubtedly increase the fiscal burden on the government. But, maintaining the current situation will arouse people’s discontent towards the government. For example, if you are a badminton player, you will definitely know that you can hardly book a badminton court even though you attempt to make a booking weeks in advance. Both increasing the capital on social welfare and retaining the current situation are risky attempts and can be fatal to society. Whatever way the government chooses will also arouse grievances towards the government, and the quality of life in a community will be decreased.
Overcrowding – A Deep-Rooted Cause for Deteriorating Quality of Life

Samuel Au 6F

“My brother, could you just stop watching TV to spare some space for me to do revision on the bed?”

“Why should I always be the one who makes concession? I do have the right to enjoy some entertainment after a whole school day!”

“Then, could you find other suitable places besides the bedroom? Our home is so small!”

What you’ve read is not a script of a soap drama, but a real-life conversation between two teenage brothers dwelling in a 40-feet-square partitioned flat in Mong Kok. While we are living in bliss, the grassroots are biting the bullets to make ends meet, residing in such tiny partitioned flats. What are the underlying reasons for their lamentably small living environment? One of which is, beyond doubt, overcrowding.

Strange yet true, overcrowding provokes a multitude of conflicts in various social strata, intensifying resource competitions and hence undermining our quality of life.

The diminution in size of flats may lead to atrocious living environment and disputes between family members or neighbours. Hong Kong’s population growth is escalating in line with its immense economic boom. Yet, the land supply has incessantly fallen behind the demand. Since then, a host of unscrupulous landlords started illegal division of flats. That’s why partitioned flats and sub-divided units sprang up like mushrooms over the past decade. If you get a chance to step into one

of the commonplace sub-divided units in Sham Shui Po, you’ll certainly find it arduous to turn around. As a matter of fact, the size of a sub-divided unit is so constricted, even a conventional television together with a dining table can merely fit the unoccupied space, let alone other basics at home. Lacking space, the privacy of independence-seeking adolescents may frequently be intruded by other family members. Conflicts may thus be triggered with ease, eroding family harmony and the quality of life.

Meanwhile, the environment in the partitioned flats and caged cubicles is even more appalling. Alongside the residents live nauseating mice and cockroaches. Apart from that, the common bathrooms and kitchens may also be a source of quarrels between handfuls of tenants when they don’t step back. With factors such as an unsanitary environment, ubiquitous arguments and unacceptable living standard, how can these dwellers have a high quality of life?

Overcrowding is also the culprit when it comes to intense competitions of social welfare groups in the community, namely leisure facilities, education, elderly services, and, of utmost importance, medical services. With an upsurging number of residents in our society, scrambles for resources are augmented, provided that the government doesn’t take the initiative to render extra resources. The recent “double-non” which has stirred up controversy within society, has conspicuously manifested the adverse effect of overcrowding. The preoccupation of school places of ‘double-non permanent’ children results in the emergence of a vast amount of cross-district local students. No pupils would like to endure long travelling time to school, but numerous Northern district children have to. No parent would like to queue up at public clinics for maternity and child services, but local parents need to. No mothers would like to keep on searching for public hospital places to give birth, but local mothers need to. Arrivals of ‘double-non’ mothers and children may exert undue pressure on our heavily-loaded medical services. Such a massive influx has put HongKongers in contention with social welfare groups, giving rise to an accumulation of grievances. In
this way, frequent demonstrations and protests may be prompted, casting a shadow on Hong Kongers’ unity and quality of life.

What’s more, contradiction between the government and citizens may be stirred up. When it comes to the solution of overcrowding, developing suburb sites and developing countryside areas may be an answer for it. Consequently, the problem of land acquisition and compensation may spark an outcry by the inhabitants of villages as they are forced to succumb to an enormous shift in lifestyle from the original hermetic life. Recently, the proposal of North East New Territories New Development Areas by the government has provoked barbarous reproach from conservationists and inhabitants. Counterviews reprimand that redevelopment is an intrusion into the areas tranquil atmosphere and peaceful nature. These instances of resistance and cases of conflicts really stand in the way of creating a harmonious society in Hong Kong.

Nevertheless, the urban sprawl is not the only way out. To address the problem of overcrowding at its roots, 3Rs have to be adopted, which are review, reallocation and restriction.

A holistic review of the current land policy has to be urgently conducted. The inadequate public land supply results in a lengthy waiting queue. The grassroots, who are toiling to earn a living, are deplorably left with no choice but reside in partitioned flats, sub-divided units or caged cubicles. Removing red tape from the construction process in existing new towns in the New Territories may shorten the waiting time, assisting the working class to escape this horrendous living standard and embrace a better quality of life.

Added to the above, reallocation of resources is of paramount importance. With the ‘double-non’ baby tide, the combined effects of a shortage of manpower and an increase in work-related stress of medical service providers has caused their situation to deteriorate further. Thus, the government should re-examine the demands of social welfare with respect to different categories. If this is achieved then the quality of social welfare provided for Hong Kongers can be safeguarded, and the interests of stakeholders can be secured.

On top of that, restriction of ‘double-non permanent’ mothers in terms of administrative and legal actions are of prominent necessity. In the short term, a ‘zero delivery quota’ for mainland mothers in public hospitals and inflicting harsh penalties on those rushing into the accident and emergency departments at the last minute to deliver should be implemented. For long-term measures, legal action, including amendment of the Basic Law, should be sought to crack down on the rising trend of mainland mothers giving birth in Hong Kong as well as a review to reconsider entitling the right of abode to them. Only by a comprehensive plan of policies can the government curb overpopulation effectively.

By means of upholding the principle of 3Rs, it is genuinely anticipated that the authorities can uproot the problem of overcrowding in timely success. With the elimination of conflicts and competition of resources, social cohesion can be promoted and the quality of life of Hong Kong citizens can be raised.
iPad - A New Learning Platform for Students
Samuel Au  6F

If you step into a compartment of an MTR train in Hong Kong, a peculiar phenomenon can always be observed. “He” is concentrating on enjoying a thrilling movie through his tablet, while “he” is busy rotating his iPad constantly in order to get a triumphant victory in a simulated car-racing game. Another “he” is flipping his fingers to keep track of the latest news. It is indeed very ubiquitous for citizens to possess an iPad for the sake of enjoying entertainment during their journeys. Some critics argue that this prodigiously developing technology may cause indulgence and obstruct students’ learning. Yet, our school gives merits to it. We are now implementing iPad teaching in junior forms and evidence proves that electronic gadgets are conspicuously good educational tools. So why don’t we take a closer look at its advantages?

The adoption of iPad learning can, beyond doubt, facilitate the promotion of outdoor activities during lessons. Getting rid of bulky books, students may just cosily take an iPad in their hands and learn outside the classroom. With pre-loaded electronic books, children can still master fundamental knowledge and skills mentioned in conventional books during outings. It will be an eye-opener for pupils to be offered golden opportunities to put the theories and knowledge into practice. With iPads provided, biological and geographical field trips can be launched more frequently, which significantly help students to further internalise and deepen their understanding. Their motivation and curiosity to discovery can hence be boosted. Compared with a dull blackboard, which of them would you choose as a medium for learning?

On the other hand, students can get instant access to the Internet. Thanks to the construction of a wireless network at school, pupils may liberally surf the virtual world to figure out useful information. It is no longer necessary for students to approach the computer room and sit in front of the monitors to search and scan through a multitude of websites. They may now conveniently take their own iPad out and make queries in their seats. With the help of the so-called ‘infinite database of knowledge’ – the Internet, students’ learning progress can thus be enhanced and they can ask more and learn more beyond books.

Promoting interaction between teachers and students is also one of the highlights of the iPad learning scheme. Stemming from a shift in teaching methodology, more learning materials, namely mini games, animations and assessments can be shared by means of the Internet, in which students’ real-time response and participation are of paramount importance. Teachers can immediately check students’ understanding. Meaningful and in-depth discussions relevant to those learning sources can be triggered, resulting in a surge in interactions between teachers and adolescents. It fosters the enhancement of the learning atmosphere and makes the learning process more riveting.

Strange yet true, juveniles may probably not be disciplined enough to withstand temptations brought about by the iPad. That junior form teenagers are not mature enough to control themselves is an undeniable truth. They are vulnerable to fall prey to the attraction of the virtual world and Apps installed in their iPads. They may attempt to violate school rules and play with their iPads without teachers’ permission. In this way, the intention of iPad learning may be contradicted.

Speaking of which, a few measures reckoning ‘PAD’ should be deployed. First and foremost, ‘P’ stands for gradual promotion of the scheme to senior forms. “Rome was not built in one day.” Learning and accumulation of knowledge are also the same. Since this new scheme may electively assist students’ learning, it should be promoted to senior forms to prolongedly help youngsters develop high-level knowledge.

‘A’ means assistance. The school should render financial support for youngsters whose family have relatively low affordability as iPads are advanced technological products. Their soaring prices, somehow amounting to several thousand dollars, will
impose heavy burdens on grass-root families. Hence, financial assistance should
definitely be provided.

‘D’ represents discipline. Students ought to behave themselves and understand
that deliberate surfing of the Internet and use of entertaining Apps are strictly
forbidden, or else iPad learning will by no means be efficient.

To call a spade a spade, only through ‘PAD’ can the iPad learning platform win
standing ovation from students and parents, and the school should bear these
measures in mind in order to make iPad learning worthwhile and fruitful.

Does National Education Equal Brainwashing Hong Kong’s New Generations?
Sigmund Au 6F

It seems to be a fait accompli that National Education will be included in some
school curricula. Therefore, we should put our attention to the question — is National
Education equal to brainwashing? In light of the following reasons, I think the subject
is not at all brainwashing the students’ minds.

To start with, brainwashing can be avoided by suitable teaching methods and
tightly-regulated curriculum. National Education is a compulsory part of some
countries’ education systems, but there are only a few concerns and worries about
brainwashing those students. Why does the implementation of this subject in Hong
Kong meet with so much criticism? The controversies stem from the notion that the
contents of the curriculum guide about our country are biased. To pacify the
opposing sound, the government promised to give a free hand for schools to choose
and teach material. Therefore, the crux of the problem now is HOW to teach. If the
government strictly monitors school curricula and makes sure the teaching method is
unbiased and multidimensional, the content of the materials will be objective and
unprejudiced. Which in turn means that brainwashing students by solely praising our
mother country can be avoided. It is thus clear that National Education is not
necessarily equivalent to brainwashing the new generations.

Furthermore, brainwashing is a long way from gaining a foothold in Hong Kong.
Our territory is a liberal city as people are given the freedom of speech and
expressions. Anti-patriots may voice out their negative opinions and impressions
about our country. Also, citizens including students, can access the Internet and
discover the darker side to our country, such as the June-fourth Movement. Added to
the above, there are some non-government educational organizations monitoring
the mode of teaching of the National Education. For instance, the Hong Kong
Professional Teachers’ Union alleges that they oppose any brainwashing education.
Teachers are self-regulated to avoid brainwashing. Hence, in case the schools
inculcate the concept of patriotism to students, National Education still cannot
brainwash them to blindly love our mother country.

Apart from the difficulties to brainwash students, Liberal Studies also helps
avoid brainwashing. It is no disputing that brainwashed students lack critical thinking.
Liberal Studies, which has the objective of cultivating students’ critical thinking,
prevents students from blindly accepting knowledge from schools. They may try to
find out more information about the mainland, such as the truth of the
aforementioned June-fourth Movement, which is not described in detail in the
curriculum.

We can hardly deny that Nation Education is not something bad in essence,
since sense of belonging to the Motherland should be nurtured from small, but
patriotisms is not equal to brainwashing students with the notion that we must view
all facets of our country as glory. Recently, there were riots towards Japan in the
mainland, with unreasonable and crazy acts of violence by brainwashed citizens. This
is an illustration of how pursuing the patriotic sentiment can turn to the extreme. I
think the government will not brainwash us at the expense of making us irrational. In
fact, it is hard for us to be brainwashed, right? The public’s concerns are just storms
in teacups. As a result, it is evident that National Education would not brainwash
Hong Kong’s new generations at any length, and I would like to reiterate that there
are no connections between National Education and brainwashing.
Pui Ching Middle School

Plenty of fun
Unique middle school in Hong Kong
Introduce the Word to us.

Collect ideas and acquire knowledge.
Here, we can outgrow the boundaries of age.
Interesting extra-curricular activities
Nothing is boring.
Great! We all love Pui Ching.

Angel Cheung 1A

I AM

I am an inquisitive boy who hates model answers.
I wonder if the end of the world is approaching.
I hear the answer from different people.
I see many people die that day.
I want ‘the End’ not to be the end.
I am an inquisitive boy who hates model answers.

I pretend I am one of the top scientists.
I feel that I am responsible for the problem.
I touch the Bunsen burner, the test tube and the chemical containers.
I worry that my invention will be become a failure.
I cry for the Earth and the humans who die on the day the world ends.
I am an inquisitive boy who hates model answers.
I understand that reality is unchangeable.

I say that perhaps we are the ones who can save the world.

I dream that ‘the End’ is not coming.

I try to invent something to save all people.

I hope my dream would come true.

I am an inquisitive boy who hates model answers.

My Name

Naomi is my English name.

A name

Of Hebrew origin.

My name was picked by my parents.

It means pleasant and sweet.

There was a woman called Naomi in the Bible, too.

She was the ancestress of Jesus.

And the mother-in-law of Ruth.

Naomi is a good name and I hope you feel the same.

Naomi Tsang 1A
School Is

School is a treasure box for knowledge transmission and learning.
School is a place where teachers are teaching and sharing.
School is a place where students are listening.
School is

School is a place with various extra-curricular activities.
School is a place for so many parties.
School is full of little athletes, dancers and smarties.
School is

School is where you can make friends.
School is a fan club with no Tom and Ann.
School is where you learn to treasure friendships that never end.
School is

School is a cradle nurturing our happy childhood.
School is a shelter preparing us for our adulthood.
School is, in every aspect, something that sounds good.
School is

Nicole Chan 1A
Pui Ching Middle School

Peaceful and joyful, as always
Unfairness, never
Intelligent, we are

Cheerful like young children
Harmony, a value which is
Ingrained deeply in us
Nowhere we can find such a
Good school like Pui Ching

Tom Cheung 1A

Acrostic Poem

My name is Andrew Li.
Yellow is my favourite colour.

Nobody hates me.
A happy boy in the world.
Mischievous but kind.
Every friend is in my mind.

I like to eat ice cream.
So yummy to make me scream.

A new life in Pui Ching Middle School.
Never against the rules.
Drawing is my hobby.
Reading in the lobby.
Eating in any place I like.
What a wonderful life!

Like doing the handicraft.
I want to be a scientist.

Andrew Li 1D
“I am poem”

I am a smiley girl who loves God
I wonder how Jesus create the world in seven days
I hear my dog whispering to me
I see a dinosaur walking down the street
I want to play basketball with Michael Jordan
I am a smiley girl who loves God

I pretend to be Michael Phelps to swim so fast
I feel I can fly with my dogs at night
I touch the wound of Jesus’ hand
I worry that SARS will come again
I cry for the wars around the world
I am a smiley girl who loves God

I understand we need patience to wait for something to happen
I say that we are all special
I dream of traveling back to the past to see the dinosaur
I try to protect the world from being sick
I hope all people in the world will believe in Jesus
I am a smiley girl who loves God

Mini Ho 1D

My “BFF”

She is very short
And her class number is 16
Right behind me
A chatterbox she is, just like
Happy to play together, forever we will be

My next friend is fat
And easily gets mad
I met her in primary five
She asked to join my group and I said
“Yes”

Very tall is my next friend
Every day we play together until the days end
New day we hurry to school and chat again
Under the large tree in the park
Sheltering from the sun

Nothing we want to do except swimming
A week we go for training
Oboe, she always playing
Me and she often go ice-skating
I hope it last forever

Mini Ho 1D
The Four Seasons

Spring is a pleasant season.
People always go to the garden.
Romantic flowers start to dance.
Insects play again after hibernation.
Nobody still wants to stay in the blanket.
Grass near the flowers grows again!

Summer is a joyful season.
Umbrella must always open.
Mad thunder roars.
My family love to swim in the shiny day.
Exciting feelings come again.
Remember to play the water gun!

Autumn is a boring season.
Unhappy wind sighs and sighs.
The trees' hair and beard are falling.
Umbrella is time to rest.
Midnight is cool enough!
No more laughing at last.

Winter is a peaceful season.
I love to decorate the Christmas tree.
Naughty winter tries to make me cool.
The people just want to sleep all the time.
Eating turkey is my all-time favorite.
Remember to wear a pair of boots!

Kitty Keung
Teacher’s Work

I’ve got the children to teach
The parents’ expectation to reach
The books to mark
The yellow bus to park
Then the chalks to get
The homework to correct

I’ve got a detention to run
The black sheep make me stun
I’ve got to look smart
There are fights to part
There are tests to mark

I’ve got to escape from this class
I’ve got to throw away the mask
Then take a phone call
And pay a visit to the mall

Faith Kwan 2A

I Wanna Be Yours

Let me be your light
To show your road in darkness
Let me be your knight
To protect you, my princess
Let me be your defender
And your housekeeper
You are my master
I wanna be Yours truly,

Let me be your cup
You can kiss me when you wake up
Let me be your pup
You will hug me when I come up
Let me bring you happiness
And drive away your sadness
I want you to be my goodness
I wanna be yours

Timmy Lam 2B
I Wanna Be Yours

Let me be your Internet Explorer
surfing the net and you are never alone.
Let me be your Dreamweaver
building a website on your own.
Let me be your Google Translate
teaching you difficult words you are afraid.
You and I meet too late.
I wanna be yours.

Let me be your Facebook
posting things you want to share.
Let me be your Outlook.
communicating with friends you care.
Let me be your Instagram
capturing the moment when you slam.
"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn"
I wanna be yours

Percy Wong 1D

I Wanna Be Yours

Let me be your dictionary
You are flipping
Let me be your stationery
You are tossing
Let me be your iPad
You are playing mad
You don't wanna go to bed
I wanna be yours

Let me be your lovely pet
The dog you are caring
Let me be your shiny trumpet
Every day you are playing
Let me be your television set
In front of me you can take a rest
I will never feel sad
I wanna be yours

Alex Tsang 2E