Joy is a net of love which you can catch souls

- Mother Teresa
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

Mr. Ho Lik Ko

Oasis is the bountiful harvest of our students’ creative writings. Thanks to the continually untiring effort of our English teachers in promoting writing, Oasis has now become our tradition in Pui Ching. Many students have developed a passion and the readiness to write and to share their works with others. Some have considered making their contribution to Oasis as an important annual endeavor. As the principal of Pui Ching, there is nothing happier and more encouraging to see our students enjoy expressing themselves, their lives and their creativity through their works.

Time passes and the years go by. When a student no longer walks up and down the school campus, what brings him or her the heart-warming youthful reminiscences may be this evergreen collective classic of inspirations garnered years ago.

Students, why hesitate? Open your minds to the world around you. Read. Be inspired. Write.

Ho Lik Ko
Principal

7 January 2019
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 an appreciation 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, 2019
Find the joy in the ordinary

- Max Lucado
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Disclaimer:
We have strived to make an effort in ensuring students’ healthy imagination and avoiding any components that may encourage superstition, glorify witchcraft or dishonor God.
In case of any mentioning of supernatural elements, the intention is purely to encourage students’ creativity and healthy imagination and to bring forth moral messages beneficial to students’ holistic development.
The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

Proverbs 10:28
This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

Deuteronomy 30:19
To the ONE who showed the way to life through death

&

To every grown-up who still clings to life despite its many defeats
Prof. Browning - the Bereaved (brown)
Blaire - the Bad Boy (blue)
Penelope - the Prankster (purple)
Gordon - the Genius (green)
Phoebe - the Pacifist (pink)
Yogi - the Yuppie (yellow)

Security Guard
Paramedic A
Paramedic B
SCENE

[House music - Der Tod Jesu (“Einleitung”), by G. P. Telemann.]

[Music fades out. All students, except Blaire, are chattering casually as they enter from side stage.]

GOR: So who’s going to open the door this time?

PEN: [unapologetically] Sorry, but I can’t remember the password.

YO: See, my hands are fully occupied. [one hand in his pocket, the other holding a bottled drink]

PEN: Maybe we can flip a coin? Let the coin decide for us! It will be fun!

PHOE: I’ll do it. Alright. I will do it.

GOR: Not you again. [ignores her] Can we have a change?

PEN: You are boring...

YO: Let him do it! [pointing with his chin]

GOR: Why can’t you do it?

YO: Can’t you see I have no hands?

GOR: Oh, right, I almost forgot you have nothing ... ha ... no hands, no brain, nothing ... [coldly, trying to start a fight]

YO: Look, I still have this to punch you with [pretends to smash the bottle into his face]

PHOE: Alright, I said I will do it, you hear me?

[Phoebe walks up to the classroom door.]

YO: I can knock you down single-handedly...

PHOE: [presses the keys a few times. Incessant musical notes emit from the pad] Stop fooling around, boys ... come on in, the professor is waiting ...

PEN: The professor can wait, don’t worry.

YO: I promise, Professor Browning would be glad to see us early today.

GOR: He would be happy to see our final product. [waves the model in midair]

PEN: [The door is unlocked, with a distinct beeping sound] Folks, time for our class.

PHOE: [Phoebe steps in and, stunned by what she sees, immediately retreats. Screams.] Ah ... [Covers her mouth at once.]

GOR: What’s the big deal there? How many times have I told you that cockroaches are just biological creatures that are nothing to be afraid of ... [then shouts as he backs down from the entrance] Ah!

PEN: Is it something of a prank? I’d certainly love to be part of it ... [gasps, barely able to produce a sound]

YO: Is this an acting class? I see ... folks, your acting is too crappy ... My oh my ... [walks up and drops his drink with shock]
[Eventually, Blaire shows up, holding a clay model in his bosom, at a leisurely pace.]

BLA:  [seeing some crying while others completely pale, dumbfounded] What’s happening here?
ALL:  [turning to his direction, unison] Bad news ...

[Music starts - St John Passion ('Herr, unser Herrscher'), by J.S. Bach]
SCENE 2

[Professor Browning enters the classroom amidst the bustle caused by students, who are fooling around and making all sorts of noise.]

YO: [seeing the professor enter, murmurs] Bad news ...

PRO: [barks] Hurry up! Be seated!

[Few react accordingly.]

PRO: [louder] Silence!

[Immediate silence. Everybody is seated.]

PRO: [clears his throat, authoritatively and dryly] So ... [scans across the faces, as if to evaluate the situation]

PEN: [parodies] So ... [a sprinkle of chuckle bursts out among the small crowd]

PRO: [clears his throat sternly] Ahem! [pauses, scans again across the faces] I suppose you know where you are. And I suppose you are at the right place.

YO: Alright.

PRO: This is Introduction to Postmodern Redottism. Course Code: EN3649.

[Gordon raises his hand]

PRO: Yes? A question already?

GOR: [then eloquently] EN3649, Introduction to Postmodern Redottism. This course presents an overview of the origin and historical background of Redottism as well as the relationship between the theoretical and the practical aspect of the phenomenon in a postmodern setting. Through discussions and hands-on experiments, students will gain a whole range of experience in the formation of the red dot and therefore acquire a comprehensive understanding of the significance of Redottism in the postmodern era.

[Hands clapping, causing a gentle thunder of applause.]

YO: Seriously? Did he recite the course outline?

PEN: [croschecks with the handout] He didn't miss a single word!

PRO: Very smart. Fully prepared.
PHOE: He is the smartest student in our class.

PRO: Browning.

PHOE: Do you mean he was ... bragging?

PEN: And I am brawling ... [jostles playfully with neighbor]

YO: While I am burping ... [makes some noise, then lets out a laughter]

PRO: [dignified] I am Professor Browning.

PHOE: Oh, right ... [refers to course outline]

YO: He's got exceptional taste. [teases] Look at his tie and jacket! The whole person is literally *browning*!

PEN: Browning. [parodies, then burst out laughing]

PRO: Ahem!

PHOE: Don't be so mean. Well, Professor Browning, would you tell us more about the course details?

GOR: Haven't I spoken quite clearly about the course outline?

PRO: There are three additional points you should bear in mind, if you want to finish this course.

PHOE: May I know what they are?

PRO: *Number one,* you listen whenever I talk.

GOR: Oh! That's boring.

YO: Are you ready for a babbling old man?

PEN: [parodies] You listen whenever I talk. Blah, blah, blah ... [continuously]

PRO: Ahem. [pauses] *Number two,* you can raise any question, but I may not answer.

YO: [bewildered] Why?

GOR: [conscious] Shush!

YO: [bewildered] Why?

PRO: [stares, shrugs his shoulders] Why not?

GOR: See? He will not give you an answer.

PRO: And, number three ... wait a minute. [fetches a tiny bottle from the chest pocket and tosses a red pill onto his palm and then into his mouth. He downs a mouthful of water and swallows the pill.]

PHOE: Is he a patient of some kind?

YO: How do I know?

GOR: With that red pill, there can be a few possibilities. But I need more time before making a correct judgment ... 

PRO: Excuse me. [returning the bottle and flattening his jacket] Where was I? Right. [sternly] And *number three,* you do whatever I order.

PEN: How come I start to have a feeling that this is more like a prison cell than a lecture hall?

YO: Funny I start to feel the same.

GOR: [raises his hand] May I say a few words?

IV
PRO: [hand shows permission] Uh-huh.
GOR: According to Martin Maslow Erikson's famous hypothesis, a lecture's efficiency is directly proportional to the interaction between the lecturer and the audience. M. M. Erikson pointed out that learning could be dramatically discouraged when students were not allowed to interact with the teacher. Theoretically speaking, therefore, the three points you've just raised will only result in an unsatisfying momentum in the class and thus bring the course to a most undesirable end.

PEN: [stammers, trying to interpret] Well ... in ... in other words ... we don't like that.
PRO: That?
YO: What you just said.
PRO: Oh. [ponders for a short while, then affirmatively] If you are not happy with these three points, you can quit. The door is over there.
YO: [stunned] What?
GOR: [cannot hold himself] You don't think I'll quit, do you?
PHOE: [tugs at his elbow, trying to stop, whispers] But you can't move on to anywhere else if you don't finish this course.
PEN: This is the basic course.
GOR: You mean I'll be in trouble if I quit?
PHOE: Exactly.
PRO: So, is anybody planning to quit already? [pauses] Anybody? [waits, while students murmur among themselves, hesitant, heads shaking]
PHOE: [murmurs] It's not a good idea.
YO: [murmurs] Do we have other choices?
GOR: [murmurs] I'm pessimistic.
PEN: [murmurs] We'd better stay.
PROF: One last time. Anybody?

[As the murmuring starts to die down, Blaire knocks at the door, enters unabashedly.]

BLA: [shameless] Oh, have I missed anything?

[the whole class turns to look]

PROF: [looks down at his watch, then raises his head] Ten minutes late. You are.
BLA: The traffic was horrible.
PROF: When you are late, you are late.
BLA: [playfully] But don't you forget the golden words of wisdom, better late than never, ever heard of that?
PROF:  [pauses] Browning. [dignified] I am Professor Browning.
BLA:  Cute. That suits your outfit totally. [chuckles, followed by giggles from others]
PROF:  Ahem. [sternly] And your name is?
BLA:  My name is Blaire. B-l-a-
PROF:  Blaire. I have you on my list. [goes down the list on his clipboard] There you are. [reads from the remark] The only one who failed in this course last year. A second-timer. I see.
BLA:  [offended, disdainful] Who cares?
PROF:  Be seated gentleman. If you want to have a more hopeful start this year.
BLA:  [offended] Excuse me? [retorts] If I want to stand, I stand. I’m not used to taking orders.
PHOE:  [tries to remind] Number three, you do whatever he orders.
BLA:  I beg your pardon?
PROF:  This gentleman seems to have missed quite a lot. Somebody please fill him in.
BLA:  [becoming hostile] What if I don’t care?

[intentionally dismisses him, writes on the board]

BLA:  Hey, I’m asking you a question!
PEN:  You can raise any question, but he may not answer. That’s point number two!
PROF:  [continues to ignore him] So class, let’s begin with a quick introduction to ...
BLA:  You! Do you find this funny?
PROF:  [continues] I would like to begin with ...
BLA:  Hey! I’m talking to you! Or are you too old and deaf to hear what I say ...
PROF:  [thunders] Whenever I talk, you listen. Is that clear?
YO:  That’s point number one ...
PROF:  He really seems to have missed everything important.
BLA:  I know I was late. But that’s it. It’s not criminal. What’s the big deal? And I can’t care less about your point number one and two and three. Who cares?
PROF:  If you are not happy, you can quit. The door is over there.
BLA:  [pauses, turns, walks towards the exit. He stops at the exit. He then turns around, snorts] Interesting. In that case, I am going to stay. Let’s see.

[Light dims. Music, Greensleeves, by The King’s Singers, fades in.]
SCENE 3

[Half-hearted, the students listen to the lecture, some scribbling on their notes, some resting their chins in palms, some fooling around quietly, while Blaire has his upper body lying flat on the desk, blatantly sleeping.]

PRO: [reads from handout, sketches on the board from time to time, in a dull tone] See, as I mentioned in the previous lecture, the dot is essentially a circle, a simple airtight closed shape, a perfect disc, bound and enclosed by a solid line, on which any point, any given point, is of an equal distance from the center of the circle. As long as the point travels carefully on the curvy line, it holds a fair and balanced space between the center and itself. The dot that we are talking about here is basically a highly concentrated version of such a circle. [pauses to have a sip of water] Are you with me?

ALL: [unanimously and lifelessly] Yes ... [dragging]

PRO: [completely absorbed in the handout, oblivious to his audience] Now, after going through the geometric structure of the dot, let us move on to the color red. Red. [from this point onwards, his voice fades under] It has a wavelength of between 630 to 740 nanometers and belongs to the longer end of the spectrum of visible light. Red is a very general term and it can be further divided into different shades, including the darker red like burgundy, maroon and cardinal, the brighter red like crimson, vermillion and scarlet, and there’s also the more pinkish red like Indian, salmon and ruby. If you happen to be color-blind, or color-insensitive, they don’t make any difference.

[While Professor Browning goes on lecturing, his voice and the light on him fade out and under, as the focus now shifts to the students, who are chatting among themselves, paying no heed to the lecture.]

PEN: Oh my word, when is he going to stop?

YO: For the past two weeks, he’s been talking and talking and talking ...

PEN: I feel like ... if I listen to him for just another minute ... I will throw up my breakfast ... together with my dinner last night ...

GOR: His voice is driving me mad, you know? How can anyone be so boring and not notice it?

PHOE: [trying to defend] Well ... to be fair, he’s only trying to give us the background. You know, a solid foundation is important, don’t you agree?

PEN: But everything is already printed on the handout, see?

GOR: Exactly! If I can read it on my own, why say it? I didn’t come here to let him tell me what I can read for myself.

YO: Gosh, I can’t stand it anymore ...

PEN: Wait, I’ve got an idea!
PRO:  [his voice suddenly audible to class] Are you still with me?

PHOE:  [whispers to alert the group] Sh-sh ...

ALL:  [unanimously and lifelessly] Yes ... [dragging, then they resume to their plotting prank]

PRO:  [completely absorbed in the handout again] Now, what really matters is the cultural implications of the color red. [from this point onwards, his voice fades under] Exactly because red is red, and it is the color of blood, it is often associated with a number of qualities in the human culture. Of course, there are slight differences in how the east and the west look at the color, but in general, red is often thought to represent and symbolize concepts such as danger, anger, love, courage, sacrifice, joy, passion. In essence, the red dot is not simply a colored round object, a meaningless sphere, a ball filled with emptiness, a distant planet where no breathing sound can be heard, nor is it a three-dimensional circular dead body. It signifies blood, the blood flowing right here in our veins right now. It is like life itself ...

[While Professor Browning goes on lecturing, his voice and the light on him fade out and under, as the focus now shifts back to the students, who are chatting among themselves, paying no heed to the lecture.]

PEN:  I’ve got an idea!

YO:  What is it?

PEN:  What do you say if we give ourselves some fun?

GOR:  What do you mean?

PEN:  Let’s give the professor a little shock.

YO:  Sounds a great deal of fun!

GOR:  But how?

PHOE:  I would not do it. I won’t risk breaking rules and having myself kicked out of this classroom.

GOR:  Use your head, buddy. You don’t have to do it yourself.

PEN:  Bingo! We’ll have somebody else do it for us ... [wicked, hinting at Blaire, heads nodding, consensus is reached] Three ... two ... [terminated by Phoebe]

PHOE:  Wait!

YO:  What’s the matter?

PHOE:  That’s ... inappropriate ...

PEN:  If you don’t want to do it, just get out of our way ... [shove her away gently] Just sit and watch! Enjoy the show. [turning back and aiming at Blaire] Three ... two ... one ... [lays hands on Blaire to awake him violently] wow!

[Professor Browning’s lecture abruptly stops. His light comes back again in a flash.]

PRO & BLA:  [upon taking the shock, both yelp] eh-yah!

BLA:  What happened?

PRO:  What happened?

BLA:  I am the one asking: what happened?
PRO: ... I was teaching and all of a sudden you shouted ... Now you are asking me what happened?
BLA: No no no ... I was sleeping and all of a sudden you shouted ... You must be mistaken!
PRO: You must be mistaken, kid. You've just broken my rule, do you realize that? [heart aches slightly and shows pain on face, but collects himself quickly] Number one -
PHOE: Number one, we listen whenever you talk.
PRO: [roars] No one should interrupt me whenever I talk! [shows pain on face again]
BLA: Hah. [sniffs, and gets emotional] Let me make this clear. First, I was only sleeping when you shouted. Second, I couldn't care less about your point number one and two and three. Third, I'm no kid and don't you call me kid.
PRO: In that case, You should not be sleeping in the first place ... kid!
BLA: [recoils and rebuts] Speaking of that, how can anyone not fall asleep in your boring lecture? [picks up a handout and mimics] All you do is read from this handout like a zombie: \textit{blah ... blah ... blah} ...
PRO: [pants more violently, pain continues] How ... How dare you ... 
BLA: I'm simply telling the truth.
PRO: [pain continues, begins to speak with difficulty] If ... If you are not happy, you can quit. The ... The door is over there ...
BLA: Let me tell you what, I'd rather die in a car accident than be bored to death in the middle of your lecture!
PRO: [triggered even more] What ... what did you just say?
BLA: I said, I'd rather die in a car accident ...
PRO: [pain becomes very severe, grabs his chest, but roars] Oh ... get out ... get out ...!
BLA: Who cares?
PHOE: [intervenes] Let's not make it worse ...
PEN: [takes Blaire away] Come on, get some fresh air outside. [they move away to a corner]

[Brovvning looks for his pills. He swallows one and his panting starts easing.]

PHOE: Professor Browning?
YO: Are you feeling better, professor?
GOR: Professor?

[Professor puts his pill bottle on the desk, tidies his shirt, then regains his composure]

PRO: Everyone listen up. [pause] You too [refers to Blaire]
BLA: Who cares?.
PRO: [panting recedes, feebly but affirmatively] Number four, [pauses] no one shall ever mention the \textit{car accident} again in my lecture. Never.

[Light dims. Music, Greensleeves, by The King's Singers, fades in.]
SCENE 4

[Students sit around an oval table, making clay models while chitchatting. Blaire has his upper body lying flat on the desk, dozing off. The pill bottle sits unnoticed on the lecturer’s desk.]

GOR: [frustrated, self-blaming] Never! I’ll never get this right.
PEN: Easy, easy.
YO: We are all struggling, buddy.
PHOE: Show a little more patience, please.
GOR: No. I’m doomed.
YO: You are not doomed. It just doesn’t look like a red dot.
GOR: [goes over the handout frantically] How can it be possible? The balance is so hard to get. The distance between the surface and the center keeps shifting.
PHOE: I know how frustrating it is ...
PEN: Mine keeps collapsing. Look. [a spiral thread is dangling awkwardly from the grip]
GOR: This is driving me insane!
YO: Stay calm. Stay cool. Shouting like that won’t take you anywhere.
PHOE: Balance.
PEN: We all know it.
GOR: [dejected] But it’s easier said than done.
YO: For me the dot is not a problem. I can handle that well. [proudly holds the spherical clay model for adoration]
PEN: [mocks] But you have real trouble with the color.
PHOE: It looks too yellowish, don’t you think?
GOR: Gosh, red. That’s another trick.
PEN: That’s the secret.
PHOE: The essence of the whole makeup! If you don’t get the red right, you fail. It’s over.
GOR: I thought making a perfect red dot is simple as ABC.
YO: You were obviously too naive, buddy.
GOR: [totally frustrated] Give me a break!
PEN: Hey, folks, what do you think? [lays eyes on the pill bottle on the desk]
PHOE: [nervous] I don’t think it’s a good idea. The professor will be mad.
GOR: Who cares?

[They start throwing and tossing the pill bottle among themselves. They wake Blaire and they keep fooling around until it finally lands into Blaire’s hands]

BLA: [Upon catching the bottle, first hesitant, then firmly] Yes. Who cares? [he then stuffs it into his pocket]
YO: And what about this? [wicked, takes out an electronic gadget from nowhere]
PHOE: That’s a bad idea too!
PEN: But we may find something useful here?
GOR: Yes, yes, that will save a lot of trouble!
PHOE: But Professor Browning asked us to figure this out by ourselves! Number three, do whatever he orders!
YO: Exactly! He orders us to get this done, [wicked] by hook or by crook.
PHOE: We will be in trouble if he finds out!
BLA: He will not find out if you don’t say a word.
PHOE: [determined] In that case, I’ll say what I have to say.
GOR: What a spoiler!
PEN: How uninteresting!
GOR: Don’t worry. I’ve got something more interesting. [snatches the gadget away]
PHOE: What are you saying?
GOR: The other day I was doing my research and I bumped into this fascinating report.

[Light dims. Projection on. Screen shows the report, which goes up and down, zoomed in and out, as they flick it around while talking.]

PEN: Who is this?
BLA: He looks familiar ...
PHOE: I feel like I ... I’ve seen him before ...
YO: His name’s on the tip of my tongue ...
PEN: [suddenly enlightened] Oh! Is that Professor Browning? he looked very different.
YO: He looked so much younger.
GOR: Bingo. This is Professor Browning, thirteen years ago.
PEN: He looked so much more ... more charming.
YO: Right, a totally different person.
GOR: After all, it’s thirteen long years ago.
PHOE: And who is this?
PEN: Would it be his ...
GOR: Yes, this is the professor’s wife, Mrs. Browning.
YO: Oh she looks gorgeous.
PHOE: Where did you get this picture?
GOR: As I’ve said, I was doing some research and I bumped into this department newsletter from those years.
PHOE: And look at that: [reads from the gadget] ‘winner of the Best Lecturer Award’?

PEN: You mean Professor Browning was the winner?

YO: [disapproving] By sheer luck.

PHOE: And: ‘for a record-breaking seven consecutive years’?

YO: [dubious] I can’t believe that! He doesn’t seem to me that popular.

PEN: Something must have gone wrong with him these years.

BLA: He is boring. His is dull. He is no fun. There’s no room for doubt. [parodies] Blah ... blah ...

YO: [scornful] I don’t think he can even teach.

PHOE: Please don’t be mean. Please.

PEN: He’s just trying to be honest to his feelings.

PHOE: Hey look, over here: ‘Professor Browning, the record-breaking winner ...’

YO: Unbelievable ...

GOR: Shush!

PHOE: ... ‘Winner of the Best Lecturer Award, disappeared from the lecture room for four months ...’

PEN: I told you, something must have gone wrong with the professor ...

YO: Let her finish!

GOR: Yes, something has gone wrong ...

PHOE: ... ‘disappeared from the lecture room for four months due to a [slightly taken aback] car accident ...’

YO: A car accident?

[Projection off. Stage lit up again. They move away from the gadget but continue to talk among themselves. An apparent change of mood.]

GOR: [stunned, sympathetically] He lost his wife and he was bed-ridden for four months.

PHOE: Because of the car accident?

GOR: The car accident took his wife too ...

YO: Oh ... she was so young and beautiful.

PEN: And they were such a happy couple.

PHOE: What a tragedy. How cruel ...

GOR: ... and a car accident that almost ended his teaching career.

BLA: [finally, after a long silence] That’s why.

PEN: What?

BLA: That’s why he was so mad last time when I mentioned the car accident.

YO: That’s why ...
PHOE: You should’ve been more sensitive.
BLA: [guilty] I have only myself to blame.
GOR: May I say a few words? Professor Browning is not an easy-going person, for sure. He is boring. He is dull. He is no fun. For sure. And as far as we know, a very horrible lecturer, there’s no doubt about it. But there’s one thing I admire about him. He has my respect for one single reason: Despite the tragic death of his wife, he still chose to move on. After the most terrible misfortunes, he chose life and he chose to live on. For that, he has my respect. [he then beats his chest gently with his fist to show respect. Others start to follow suit unanimously, to show the same respect. With quiet emotions, they do this together for a while until Professor Browning comes in.]

[In comes Browning. Unnoticed by the students, he barks upon seeing what is happening.]

PRO: [fury-charged] I was only in the washroom and what have you all been doing? Didn’t I ask you to practise making that model?
PHOE: Prof ... Professor ... we ... we are terribly sorry ...
YO: We ... we were only trying to ...
PRO: No excuses! Number three -
ALL: [except Blaire] We ... we do whatever you order.
PRO: So do you want to get kicked out? The door is over there.
PEN: No, of course not, Professor Browning.
PRO: Where are your models? Show me your models!

[They all show their products. Professor surveys their models, shows disgust and contempt on seeing their works, while spitting out disapproving comments.]

PRO: And you? [refers to Blaire]

[Blaire lifts his ugly product]

PRO: [utterly dissatisfied] What is this? Do you call this a red dot?
BLA: Forget it, I got this all wrong ... [deep breath, then changes his mind] but I’ll keep trying.
PRO: [stunned] Oh, you sound very different today.
BLA: I’ll keep trying. I promise, [with some difficulty] I’ll ... I’ll move on.
PRO: [turns to the others] So, listen, you people. Your final project will be due soon. Get this done, or you’ll fail in this course.
PEN: Please. This is so hard.
PRO: If you are not happy with it, you can quit. The door is over there.
ALL: [except Blaire] Please ...

PRO: I repeat ... [heart aches] ... did anyone see my pill bottle?

[Everyone looks at Blaire. Blaire takes out the pill bottle from his pocket.]

BLA: [softly] It's over here. [hands it in] Professor.

[Professor Browning grabs it and quickly swallows a pill and puts the bottle back into his pocket. He takes a while to breathe before he continues. As Professor Browning turns to leave, Blaire calls aloud to stop him.]

BLA: Prof ... Professor?

PRO: Yes?

BLA: Professor Browning ..., [stutteringly] .. um ... did ... did you ... [unable to finish]

PRO: Yes? I'm listening.

BLA: Professor, well ... um ... you ...


BLA: I mean ... did ... did you ... [wrestles within himself and gets emotionally intense until finally sighs and gives up] ... forget it.

PRO: [sternly] Do you have a question, kid?

BLA: Professor, yes. But - number two ...

PRO: [dumbfounded] What?

BLA: We can raise any question, but you may not answer.

[Light dims. Music, Greensleeves, by The King's Singers, fades in.]
SCENE 3

[All dark, except the desktop reading light turned on by Professor Browning. He can be seen working in the feeble light and murmuring to himself, utterly absorbed in his labor.]

PRO: Answer? The red dot is more than just an answer.

[On the other hand, Blaire and Phoebe are creeping about outside the lecture room. They have a flashlight with them. Tiptoeing in the dark, they finally locate the door and try to break in the room. They act secretively and are afraid of being caught red-handed.]

BLA: [As they are trying to unlock the door] What is the password again?
PHOE: Try this.
BLA: It won’t work.
PHOE: Try again!
BLA: [desperate] I’m trying ... [with a distinct beeping sound, door opens]
PHOE: There you go. I’ve told you.
BLA: [lets out a sigh of relief] Right ...

[They enter, still stealthily murmuring all the way.]

PHOE: Why did you drag me into all this?
BLA: You are the nicest person in the whole class.
PHOE: Oh really? [insincerely] Thank you!
BLA: Shush ... keep it low ... keep it low.
PHOE: I don’t understand. Why do you have to come back in the middle of the night just because you ...

BLA: [squeaks] Ah! [shocked to find the flickering shadow of the Professor who is at work.]
PRO: [stunned] Ah! Who on earth is there? [heart aches]
BLA: Professor Browning?
PRO: Who is lurking in that dark corner?
PHOE: It’s us ... [throw light onto themselves, make a scary face]
PRO: Oh my word! You’ve scared the life out of me!
PHOE: Our apologies, professor.
PRO: What are you doing here? The two of you?
BOTH: Um ...
PRO: You know we don’t have night courses.
PHOE: It's all because of him!
PRO: Blaire?
BLA: Well ...
PRO: Don't you tell me you are here for a walk ...
PHOE: In fact, Professor, we are here for our work. Our course work.
PRO: You mean the red dot model?
BLA: Yes, Professor.
PHOE: And he said he was afraid of the dark.
BLA: I didn’t say that.
PHOE: He said he had left his handout in the lecture room and he wanted to come back and fetch it.
BLA: That’s it. Silly me.
PRO: Why don’t you wait until tomorrow?
BLA: Tomorrow is the deadline, Professor. Don’t you remember?
PRO: Oh, now you mention it.
BLA: And ... I promised you ... I’ll move on. I’ll keep trying until I get it right.
PHOE: And what about you?
BLA: Yes, Professor, what are you doing here in the middle of the night?

[In comes the security guard who carries out night patrols in the area, with the light beams shooting everywhere]

SEC: Oh, Professor Browning!
PRO: Oh, hello there.
SEC: Staying late again tonight, yes? [hesitates when sees them] ... Hi?
BOTH: Hi?
SEC: And ... they are?
PRO: Never mind, they are my students.
BOTH: Hi.
SEC: I heard some unusual noise and I thought some strangers had broken into the area. Is everything all right, Professor?
PRO: [conjuring up excuses] Well ... they are here to help me tonight ... I ... I asked them to come with me tonight ...
SEC: That’s why. No problem, go ahead. [cheeky, hand on heart] I swear I didn’t see anyone.
BOTH: Thank ... thank you.
SEC: Have to go now. [intends to leave but turns back] Hey, professor, but don’t overload your heart with too much work. You shouldn’t stay here every night. Don’t forget your heart problem. Ok?
SEC: Mind you, people with a heart problem can catch you off guard. You'd better look after him.
BOTH: Sure. Sure.
SEC: Really have to go now. See you tomorrow, Professor.
PRO: Of course. Thank you, goodbye.
BOTH: Goodbye.

[Exits the security guard.]

PRO: [embarrassed] We are, sort of, friends. [ironically] We meet here every night.
BLA: [after some thinking] Does it mean ... you work until this late hour ... basically every night?
PRO: Well ... you may say so ... 
BLA: Wow.
PHOE: Wow.
BLA: And ... you have a heart problem?
PRO: [short pause, draws in a deep breath] You had some question for me the other day, didn't you?
BLA: Yes, Professor ... 
PRO: You wanted to ask whether I had a car accident thirteen years ago, yes?
BLA: Yes ... 
PRO: You wanted to ask whether I was injured in the accident, yes?
BLA: Yes ... 
PRO: You wanted to ask whether I was bed-ridden and could not teach for four months, yes?
BLA: Yes ... 
PRO: And you wanted to ask whether my wife lost her life in the accident, yes?
BLA: Yes ... 
PRO: The answer to all these questions is yes. [emphatically] Yes.
BLA: Professor ... 
PRO: I started to have a heart problem ever since then. But did I want to quit? No. Did I want to give it all up? [pauses] No.
PHOE: We are sorry for bringing this up ... 
BLA: I shouldn't have asked these questions ...
PRO: It's alright. It's alright. Everybody wants an answer to their question. When I think of all that, sometimes I still want an answer. [pauses] But I've come to realize that this is life. You've got to move on, even though the answer is not available. You understand what I'm saying?

[both nod their heads hesitantly]
PRO: You don’t quit trying. Live on, even though there doesn’t seem to be an answer.

BLA: Professor Browning ...

PRO: [chuckles] Look at that. [refers to the model Blaire is holding]

BLA: [embarrassed] I know it’s still a mess right now, professor, but I promise I’ll ...

PRO: You want to get the right color, you want to get the right shape. You want to get a perfect red dot. And you have no idea to do it, right?

BLA: Well, exactly.

PRO: I know that feeling. But have I ever told you? After all has been said and done, still this cannot be taught. You can only feel it for yourself.

BLA: Feel it for myself?

PRO: Feel it for yourself, as if there was no handout and no user manual to guide you.

BLA: [short pause] Thank you, Professor.

PRO: [straightens up] Okay. I’ve got to continue with my work. And you’ve got to continue with yours.

BLA: Right, professor.

PHOE: So we’d better go now, and leave you to your work.

BLA: Goodbye for now, Professor. Just don’t stay too late.

PHOE: Don’t overload your heart with too much work.

BLA: Don’t forget your heart problem. Ok?

PRO: Don’t forget: Your work is due tomorrow.

BLA: No problem, Professor. I’ll get it done. I promise.

[Light dims. Music, Greensleeves, by The King’s Singers, fades in.]
SCENE 8

[Exactly as in SCENE 1.]

YO: I promise, Professor Browning would be glad to see us early today.

GOR: He would be happy to see our final product. [waves the model in midair]

PEN: [The door is unlocked, with a distinct beeping sound] Folks, time for our class.

PHOE: [Phoebe steps in and, stunned by what she sees, immediately retreats. Screams.] Ah ...
[Covers her mouth at once.]

GOR: What's the big deal there? How many times have I told you that cockroaches are just biological creatures that are nothing to be afraid of ... [then shouts as he backs down from the entrance] Ah!

PEN: Is it something of a prank? I'd certainly love to be part of it ... [gasps, barely able to produce a sound]

YO: Is this an acting class? I see ... folks, your acting is too crappy ... My oh my ... [walks up and drops his drink with shock]

[Eventually, Blaire shows up, holding a clay model in his bosom, at a leisurely pace.]

BLA: [seeing some crying while others completely pale, dumbfounded] What's happening here?

ALL: [turning to his direction, unison] Bad news ...

YO: [points to the entrance] There ... Pro ... Professor ...

PEN: I'm afraid ... he ...

BLA: Stop whining! Tell me! What is happening here?

PEN: The Professor has dropped dead ...

BLA: What?

[Eventually, Blaire rushes to Professor Browning, whose body is lying near the door of the lecture room.]

BLA: He's still breathing!

GOR: Give him some fresh air!

BOTH: [gently slaps his face, yells] Professor Browning! Professor!

ALL: Professor!

BLA: He's still breathing! Get help now! Call the emergency hotline! [shouts] Hurry Up! Hurry up! Now!

[Music starts - *St John Passion* ("Herr, unser Herrscher"), by J.S. Bach]

[The stage is now filled with dreamy lights as music fades in to show the passage of time.]
SCENE 7

[While both the dreamy lights and music continue, the following actions take place, in the absence of dialogues, to show a transition from SCENE 6 to SCENE 7.]

[Paramedics A and B enter with a stretcher. They transfer the unconscious Professor Browning onto the stretcher, and then carry it to leave the stage, followed by the group of students.]

[Moments later, the Paramedics push a hospital bed into the stage. After settling the bed at the right position, they leave. They appear again from side stage to usher the group of students into the scene. The students, except Blaire, sit around the bed, without moving a bit or uttering a sound.]

[Both the dreamy lights and music fade out.]

PAR A: [pat on their shoulders] Now, there you go.
PAR B: It’s alright. [then they take exit together]

BLA: [rushes into the scene, panting] Where is the professor?
PEN: [short pause, solemnly] He has just left.
BLA: [rummages in the bed to find nothing left] Oh! [breaks into tears, wails and sobs]

[Professor Browning appears from side stage.]

PRO: [seeing Blaire] What’s the noise all about?
BLA: [turns to see, utterly dumbfounded] Who ... who are you?
PRO: Browning, Professor Browning. Don’t you recognize me?
BLA: [still scared, touching him here and there to be reassured] But they say you ... you’ve just left.
PRO: Yes. I’ve left for the washroom. Why?

[The others burst out laughing, while they help the professor get into bed again.]

PRO: [after settling down] Blaire, remember the first time I met you?
BLA: [regains his composure] I remember. I was ten minutes late.
PRO: And you are late again this time.
BLA: Yes, but I’m improving, Professor. Four minutes this time.
PRO: [chuckle] Yes, you are improving. [short pause] You are different now.
BLA: You look different too, Professor. I mean, seriously.
PRO: I thought I wouldn’t make it this time.
PHOE: You have been unconscious for three days, Professor.
GOR: The heart surgery took almost seven hours.
PEN: The doctor said it was a close shave.
YO: A narrow escape from death, so to speak.
PHOE: And we were all so worried about you.
PEN: I even cried ...
YO: Me too ...
BLA: You shouldn’t have worked too hard.
GOR: Working late at night is no good for your health, professor.
PHOE: You even forgot to take your pills.
YO: That’s why you fell unconscious.
PEN: Why did you do it to yourself?
GOR: You should be banned from the lecture room.
BLA: No more night shift, please.
PRO: [Fed up with the incessant remarks] Alright, alright. Got it. I’ll learn from this.

[Professor Browning wants a sip of water. Short silence.]

PHOE: [after the sip of water] But professor, we are glad you made it.
GOR: Yes, we are happy to have you back.
PEN: Thank you, Professor Browning.
YO: For everything.
BLA: Thank you.
PRO: It was all like a dream, I mean, being so close to death. Twice. The car accident thirteen years ago, and this heart attack.
PHOE: And you survived them both.
YO: And you will live on.
PRO: Can’t say for sure, but at least I won’t quit easily. [smiles, and suddenly recalls] Oh, yes! The deadline!

[From this point onward, the students switch to a more playful mood.]

PEN: The deadline? You are fully alive now.
GOR: Well ... you mean it’s time for medication?
BLA: Oh, what time is it, by the way ...
PHOE: Should we alarm the nurse?
YO: Perhaps we should call the doctor instead ...
GOR: Speaking of which, may I say a few words ...

PRO: Ah-hem! Kids, no more fooling around. The deadline for your final course work. The model.

   Where is your red dot model?

YO: Easy, easy, professor.

PEN: Professor, you sure you want to see it here?

GOR: I’m afraid that there are rules that prohibit the display of ....

PHOE: And you’d better have more rest ...

PRO: [demands] Show me your models now!

PHOE: Of course, of course ...

BLA: Mind you, it’s ... it’s not a perfect one ... but I promise ... I did try to give it my best ... now, don’t blame me if it gives you another heart attack ...

PRO: [roars] Number three -

ALL: [unison] We do whatever you order.

[As they all pull out their models from somewhere, the light dims.]

[Music, Greensleeves, by The King’s Singers, fades in.]

[Curtain.]
With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Isaiah 12:3
Any Helping Hand?
1A Ivan Ng

I am a stray dog, constantly finding food in the smelly and stinky rubbish bin. The food is all disgusting! I once had some moldy bread and a banana which had turned all black-skinned...

One day, I couldn’t even find any food in the rubbish bin! That’s when my bad luck started as I found nothing the next day and the day after...

On the seventh day, I felt exhausted and laid on the ground in front of a pet shop, hoping someone would give me some food. Suddenly, a man, who was around forty to fifty years old, walked out from the shop, there seemed to be a scrumptious bone on top of his bag!

I felt energy through my body, and started chasing after the man with the fastest speed. The man did not know what had happened, but was scared of me as my reaction was intimidating. He started rushing like a criminal, eluding the police.

After ten minutes, the man started sweating and panting. I could see his back was all wet. The man seemed to have given up. He stopped and put the bone on the ground slowly.

As I drew closer, I suddenly realized there was no meat on the bone!

I was mad and barked at the man, I shouted, “Why did you lie to me?” in dog’s language hysterically.

Of course, he wasn’t able to understand but none of it mattered as I decided to chase after him again. Do you know why? It was because there must be more food in his bag!

He was shocked at first, dashed quickly and gasped. Finally, he gave up his bag.

I said to myself, “It must be full of food! I am blessed!”

I put my whole head into the bag but despaired immediately. There was no food in the bag but only some documents and money!

I was desperate, feeling all of my energy has been stolen by someone. My eyelids became heavier and heavier.
Greetings from Hong Kong
1A Audrey Tsui

Dear Sammi,

How are you? Is it cold in England? Hong Kong is so hot even though it’s winter, oh my goodness! It’s 25°C here! By the way, I miss you so much that I cry almost every day!

Let me tell you some good news. I’ll go to England this Christmas! I’m so excited when my mother told me that I could go. As you know, I have always wanted to go to Europe one day and it’s a dream come true now.

Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you about Miss Lee. I’m sorry to tell you that she has got an illness. She’s so sick that she can’t even continue teaching. I also miss her a lot. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and will be having an operation this week. I really hope she’ll get well soon. As you know, she has two children and they’ll still young, I really don’t want them to lose their mother. Yet, I truly believe that she’ll get well soon because Miss Lee is such a good person. God will heal her. So don’t be too sad.

OK, let’s talk about some happy things instead. So, what should we do this Christmas holiday? I suggest we plan a sleepover or a girls’ party. You can also invite your besties. I think it’ll be an unforgettable party. I’m already feeling excited about it right now. I just want to be with you at this moment. I remember you’ve told me about an outstanding fish and chips restaurant in your town, right? Shouldn’t we go there and have dinner one night, or shouldn’t we go to the London Eye? I’ve seen it before from a travel guidebook. It’ll be so nice and the view must be extremely astonishing. Someone also told me that it’s the biggest Ferris wheel in the world.

By the way, do you remember the last time we went to Ocean Park? It’s so funny. You screamed on the Ferris wheel so loudly that I was almost deaf! I hope you will not do this again when we’re on the London Eye.

I’m looking forward to this chill and laid-back trip to England. Take me somewhere fun. Let me know what your plans are. I’ll wait for your reply. See you in a month!

Love,
Audrey
Mr. Butcher and Shadow

1A Jocelyn Cheung

Although it was still dawn, the streets were already congested. Mr. Chan, a chef, was hurrying out of his flat to go to work, as he was terribly late. All of a sudden, a stray dog came out of nowhere, blocking Mr. Chan’s path. Mr. Chan tried to shoo it away, feeling irritated, but the action was in vain. Instead of leaving, the famished stray growled at him menacingly, baring its sharp fangs. Shocked, Mr. Chan backed away, in an attempt to escape from the wild beast.

Mr. Chan ran as fast as his legs could carry him, with the stray right behind him, creating a hilarious scene. In an act of desperation, he jerked to a halt and threw a bone that he had bought from the butcher’s onto the pavement, hoping the stray would get distracted long enough for him to sneak away. The dog glared at the juicy bone blankly, then turned back to Mr. Chan, completely ignoring the bone lying right in front of it. “Good doggie. Come on. Eat the bone, it’s fresh from the butcher’s. Come on now, good doggie,” coaxed Mr. Chan. Suddenly the beast leaped towards Mr. Chan wildly, barking at him ferociously as if it had turned insane. Mr. Chan, fearing that the dog was about to maul him, ran away from the stray.

The chase started all over again. Mr. Chan, sprinted down the street with the stray in hot pursuit, both trying to weave through the busy, crowded streets. After a long period, they both arrived in a narrow alley and right in front of them was a dead end. Mr. Chan was beyond exhaustion. When he saw the dead end, his face turned pale and tense. The stray started to close in, staring at him with a deadly glare, readying itself to pounce. Mr. Chan was desperate. Like a losing gambler in a casino, he fished out his wallet and threw a ten-dollar bill down in front of the stray, crossing his fingers.

The stray halted in front of the bill and sniffed the money cautiously. Surprisingly, it started to wag its tail excitedly. Mr. Chan sighed a sigh of relief and left the stray, but turned back to find the stray behind him following his footsteps! The stray tilted its fury head and wagged its tail, and began to run around Mr. Chan’s legs.

Starting from that day on, the stray followed Mr. Chan wherever he went, just like a shadow. That is why the stray was known as “Shadow” from then on.
What to Do With Bullies?
1B Marco Cheung

Dear Bruce,

How are you? I have read your previous letter. I was shocked and sorry for you. Let me give you some advice.

Firstly, you said that you were pushed to the ground. You can tell your parents and teachers immediately when you are being bullied. You should tell your parents or teachers more information to help them solve the problem. After you told your parents or teachers, they will punish the bullies to let them know the importance of being nice to others. Therefore, they may stop bullying you. You should be brave, don’t be afraid!

Secondly, you said that they gossiped about you behind your back. Try to stay away from the bullies and make more friends that are kind to you and play with you so that you can ask them what you can do if you are being gossiped about. After staying away from the bullies and making good friends, your friends can help you and play with you happily. Remember, you will be happy and you can make many new friends.

Thirdly, you said that they threatened you. You can tell the disciplinary teachers about it. You should tell them how the bullies threatened you and what words they said. After you tell the disciplinary teachers, they will call their parents and warn them. Remember, you will be happier and you won’t need to be scared of them anymore.

Drop me a few lines when you are free. Promise me you will stay optimistic and strong in front of the bullies. My suggestions are ways for you to get away from the bullies and live a new life. You will be happier after others stop bullying you.

Love,
Chris
How to Stand Against Bullies?

1B Ella Gee

Dear Bruce,

It’s such a long time since we have had any contact. I haven’t seen you for a long time. I understand it must be very disappointing for you to have such a scary school life. I’m sorry I wasn’t there to help you. So I decided to write a letter to give you some advice, make you feel confident and let you know how to face the bullies.

Firstly, I know you were being pushed to the ground. In my opinion, I think you should tell your parents and teachers that you were being bullied. You can’t hide this problem. You should tell your class teachers to help you immediately. Also, you have to give more information to help teachers solve your problem. After you have explained it, teachers will warn them and they will stop. Be brave! Don’t be afraid!

Secondly, I know the bullies were gossiping about you. In my opinion, you can tell your parents. Your parents will know the feelings in your heart. Your parents might contact the school to find out the bullies and understand what they did to you. Parents are the most reliable, they won’t hurt you. They will only try their best to make the best choice for you. Please remember, be confident! You are not alone!

Thirdly, I know they were threatening you. You must be very frightened. If I were you, you could tell your true friends to help you. You can tell your friends to communicate with the bullies to help you find the reasons why they bullied you. Your friends will also let them know that bullying people is not good behaviour. After that, they will say sorry to you and may also be friends with you. At last, you will have some good friends again! Please always remind yourself, you are not alone, I’ll stay with you always!

Finally, I hope you can have a new group of friends and also have a wonderful school life!

Love,
Chris
Unexpected Weather
1B Zachary Lam

Last week, Mary and her parents planned a trip to America. It was sunny and clouds were seldom up in the sky. Mary’s dad was whistling a tune, while her mum was happily applying sunblock. Mary was changing her camera’s battery for the trip. She was very excited because she had never been to America.

As they were halfway there, a typhoon attacked Hong Kong. Thunder rolled and lightning struck. A strong gust of wind swept the fallen leaves aside. Heavy rain bounced off the windshield. People could not drive fast because if they did, they would lose control. There was a lot of traffic. A lot of people were honking because they were in a hurry. Mary’s dad was very frustrated and said sarcastically, “Now we can’t even go to the airport! This is just wonderful!” He then focused back on the wheel with an unhappy grunt.

After an hour, they finally arrived at the airport. The airport was very crowded. They could not even step foot into the airport. The worst thing was, they didn't even bring an umbrella! Mary’s mum said, "We've waited in the car for so long just to get here. We can't give up now!" So they went on waiting in the rain, they became so wet that they could no longer get any wetter. The rain just got heavier.

Time passed very slowly in these occasions, a few hours felt like days for Mary and her parents. When it was their turn, they found out that all flights towards America were delayed. Mary’s dad went as red as a tomato. There was a loud clap of thunder, as if the sky was telling them to give up and go home. Feeling defeated, they sadly went home by car which took them another hour to get back. When they arrived home, their feet were soaked. Their clothes could squeeze out water enough to quench a person’s thirst for one day. They took a shower and it was already eleven o’ clock. They went out for the whole day for nothing.
Say No to Bullies!
18 Janice Tsang

Dear Bruce,

Hi, Buddy! Long time no see! Someone told me that you have been bullied. It must be extremely nerve-wracking and bullies are petrifying. I understand you as I have faced those problems before. I feel sorry for you and for not being there to help you. That’s why I am writing this letter to you about how to face the bullies and tell you how to avoid them when I am not around.

I heard my classmate said that you had been pushed to the ground more than four times. You must tell your parents and teachers to help you immediately because if you don’t tell them, the bullies may not stop. Once you tell your teacher, your teacher will stop them from bullying you. At last, teachers will punish the bullies to make them understand the importance of being nice to others, therefore they will stop. You just need to be brave and don’t be afraid!

Also, I knew that the bullies have been gossiping about you behind your back. I understand that their words can make you crazy. You just need to ignore them. You must consider them as fake and you should ignore them. After a few days, the bullies will stop gossiping behind you because you don’t seem to be angry about them. When you are angry, they will think it is funny so please ignore them.

They didn’t just push you to the ground and gossiped about you behind your back, they also threatened you. You must tell the social workers. Maybe you don’t want to talk to them because you didn’t know who they are but this is your only choice. You can tell them that you are being bullied and ask them to show you ways to control your feelings. If you want to know why they are doing this, you can ask the social workers to help you ask the bullies for their reason behind. Social workers can advise you on how to avoid the bullies. You just need to tell them the details so that they can help you.

I hope my advice can be of use to the rest of your life, and if you are bullied, please tell me immediately so I can help to protect you. Send me news when you know anything more about your new school life. Stay happy!

Best,
Chris
Yesterday morning was very hot, the sky was limitless, blue and cloudless. The sun was boiling and the trees and plants stayed still because there wasn’t any wind. It seemed lovely weather for travelling.

May, her mom and her dad were packing their luggage for a trip to Tokyo. May and her mom were thin and short, so it was hard for them to carry the luggage. Her dad didn’t say anything but put the luggage in their car. He was happy so he was singing. May felt happy as well because of the love from her dad. She was very excited about the trip because it will be her first time going to Tokyo.

They got in their four door car and set off to the airport. Suddenly, it started to rain heavily. The wind was wild and stormy. The clouds were getting thicker and thicker. Her dad turned on the radio. It said a typhoon was coming to Hong Kong. While they were listening to the radio, a thunderclap suddenly scared them. It was very loud and fearful. They started to worry about the trip because there was a traffic jam on the Tsing Ma Bridge.

When they arrived at the airport, they were shocked because the airport was very crowded. Her mom checked the weather report using her smartphone and it was typhoon Signal No. 3. They went to the notice board and May said, “I saw our flight. It said it was...cancelled?” “Oh, our flight has been cancelled, so what do we do now?” her mom asked. May sat on a chair and felt very disappointed.

The sky turned more windy and grey. Her dad and mom were thinking about what to do. Suddenly May said, “Maybe we can wait for a moment.” Her mom and dad agreed. They waited for half an hour but then learnt that the Hong Kong Observatory had announced that the typhoon Signal No. 8 had been hoisted. May was very upset.

At last, they took their luggage back to the car and her dad drove home. What a bad and unlucky day!
Unexpected Weather
1B Sammie Wat

Last summer, Carrisa and her family planned to go on a trip. They packed all the things into their suitcases. Before they left their house, the sun shone brightly upon the sky. Carrisa looked up and said, “What lovely weather!”

When they were on their way to the airport, their car stopped suddenly. Some policemen rode on motorbikes, and went through the narrow gap between cars. Carrisa saw a car had crashed into another car. Carrisa and her family were stuck on the highway. The sky was grey and cloudy. After a few seconds, it started to rain cats and dogs. Carrisa was worried and anxious. Her heart beat quickly.

After they arrived to the airport, they saw a lot of people queuing up in front of the entrance. They were depressed because they might not catch the flight. However, they still went inside the airport. Luckily, their flight wasn’t cancelled. They checked-in with joy. Then the sun came out. The weather was great.

Carrisa was lucky this time. She wouldn’t forget this memorable experience.
The glorious sun shone brilliantly in the sapphire sky. Columns of creamy white clouds glided carefree across the vast sky. My face lit up with excitement because my family and I were heading to Japan! We loaded everything into the car and soon we were off to the airport.

Without warning, the sky was overcast. Out of the blue, lightning flashed frighteningly and leaves rustled as a brisk wind blew. The heavy downpour was like a wet blanket to my high spirits. In addition, there was a traffic jam about a hundred meters down the road. We were concerned as the long queue seemed to take ages. The long line of vehicles moved along at a slow pace, crawling almost bumper to bumper. I was surprised because there was usually a smooth flow of traffic along this road.

When we reached the spot where the road joined a roundabout, I saw the cause of the traffic jam. It was a bus on the wrong side of the road. Two of its wheels were resting on the road divider. It had knocked down a lamppost and there was broken glass all over the road. We saw red and felt glum about the long queue and the road accident. Finally, we arrived at our destination - the airport.

When we arrived, we were startled. The airport was so crowded that it didn’t even have room for even just one more person. It was bursting at its seams! Typhoon signal No. 3 had been hoisted so the plane couldn’t take off. We need to wait until the typhoon was gone.

Unluckily, the weather began to deteriorate. We were suggested to stay at home for safety’s sake. I was devastated. I wish I could go to Japan next time!
My Worst Vacation
1C Nicole Lai

Last week, my family and I were on a two-day vacation at a theme park. In the morning, we packed everything and put it in my dad’s car. My dad was so excited that he was humming a song all the while.

Fifteen minutes into the drive, we were caught in a traffic jam and it lasted for one and a half hours. We were all upset. As we finally arrived at the theme park, we were surprised that there were a lot of people waiting, so we decided to go to the hotel first. Upon our arrival, the receptionist told us our room wasn’t ready and asked us to stay at the lobby. We asked for free drinks but she said she couldn’t do that. We waited there for over an hour and they finally finished cleaning our room.

After that, we went back to the theme park. Although there were fewer people this time, we still had to wait for thirty minutes to enter. What was worse was, inside the park, we had to wait for an hour for any of the games. We didn’t have fun at all. Therefore, we decided to go back to the hotel early and hoped that there would be fewer people the next day.

The next day, we went to the theme park again and there were twice as many people. We spent nearly two hours waiting and my dad refused to wait any longer, so we decided to go home.

This was the worst vacation I have ever had in my life and I don’t want to experience it again.
Informal Letter – Reply Letter to Suki  
1C Mavis Lee

Dear Suki,

I am so glad that you are coming to Hong Kong with your family during the Christmas holidays. You will have an unforgettable time here. Hong Kong is an excellent place for you to visit. As it is the first time for you and your family here, I have a few suggestions. I hope you would consider them.

Firstly, I know that you enjoy going to theme parks and Hong Kong has an excellent choice for you. If I were you, I would definitely visit Disneyland. It is a good choice. There are numerous shows on offer, such as, Mickey and the Wondrous Book, The Lion King Show and Moana. The shows are amazing as there are lots of special effects. You are going to fall in love with them. Also, there are different amusement park rides, such as, Mystic Mansion, Big Grizzly, Mountain Runaway Mine Cars, The Iron Man Experience, Dumbo the Flying Elephant and many others. All of them are popular and you should absolutely give them all a go. On top of all these, there are unique parades and street performances that you can watch. These can all be seen both during the day and at night. Unfortunately, the fireworks display has been cancelled since January 2018 so you won’t be able to experience it.

I also realised that your mum loves shopping. Her hobby is the same as my mum’s. Did you know that Hong Kong is called a “Shopper’s Paradise”? Of course there are many shopping malls but I would like to firstly recommend several streets in Kowloon. They are Fa Yuen Street and Nathan Road. Both of them are in Mong Kok. You will be able to buy plenty of inexpensive things along these streets in Mong Kok but please tell you mum to be aware of replicas, such as copy watches and imitation luxury handbags. If your mum wants to buy some real luxury brand items, then I suggest her to shop in Tsim Sha Tsui, Causeway Bay or Central. The products on offer there are genuine. Finally, there are also some factory outlet stores in Tung Chung. Your mum must make the effort to visit them.

For your dad who likes dining out, there are many special restaurants in Hong Kong. Your family can go to a cha chaan teng or a traditional teashop, such as the Australia Milk Dairy in Jordan. It most certainly provides delicious food with a local twist. You can also try dim sum in a Chinese restaurant. After all, I’m sure it’s difficult to find genuine dim sum dishes in Japan. There are also Michelin Star restaurants in the IFC, but remember to book a table in advance to guarantee a unique experience. Your taste buds will thank you for it. For another great experience in Hong Kong, I wish you and your family could also book a table at the Krug Room. It’s in the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. It is a secret room that looks into the kitchen. While you are sitting and enjoying yourself, you can watch the Head Chef prepare a meal that he has personally created for you. Everyone’s menu is different.

Hong Kong may get very warm, so I suggest you and your family bring some summer clothing. Even though it will be winter time when you visit, Christmas was still quite warm last year, so remember to bring along some insect repellent and sunscreen lotion. You don’t want to have a nose like Rudolph the Reindeer after all.

I truly hope that you will have a great time in Hong Kong. If you have any inquiries, you can e-mail me and I will be more than happy to assist you. I hope you and your family will consider my suggestions for the trip as a reference. Enjoy your trip and hope to see you soon.

Your friend,
Eugene
An Unforgettable Experience

1D Heidi Wong

Last week, my cousin, Tom and I went to Sai Kung Beach. We went swimming, built sand castles and played volleyball. While we were playing happily, we saw a glass bottle flowing in the sea.

“People nowadays do not protect the environment. They throw rubbish everywhere!” Tom said angrily. However, I noticed that there was a piece of paper inside the glass bottle. I opened it and took out the piece of paper. Then, I read out the message.

“Help! I am trapped on an isolated island. I am scared. I am very hungry. I have been here for three days. Please help me!”

We were surprised to find this note. We were in panic. We ran as fast as we could to the nearby police station and told a policeman what had happened. He was shocked. The police immediately sent out a search party and a helicopter to look for the missing person.

We got on a helicopter with the policemen. The helicopter flew up to the sky. The view was magnificent but we could not enjoy it as we were worried about the missing person.

“I see a big SOS on the island! Look, a man is waving his arms!” Tom shouted nervously. The helicopter flew down to the island to rescue the man. We were happy and surprised to see the missing man. He was the famous footballer, Ronald! We were thrilled as Ronald was our idol. It was really a once-in-a-life time experience.

“My yacht sank when I was on the way to the Sun Island. Then I swam to this unknown island. I was frightened as nobody was here. I could not find any food. Luckily, I found a glass bottle, so I wrote a note, put it in and threw it to the sea. I hoped someone would read my note and call the police. Thank you so much!” said Ronald thankfully.

Ronald gave us some football shirts with his autograph. Tom and I were so excited. However, what made us most happy was not the presents from Ronald. The most significant thing was that we had saved a life. It was a really meaningful experience.
“Was that a Gold-Digger Dog I Saw?”

1E Yasmin Wong

In the dead of night, there was a tranquil street. At the end of the street, there was a club. Suddenly, the massive door of the club swung open and a blast of music echoed through the lonely alley. Followed by a wave of cheers, a puny man walked through the door with a big grin and swollen eyes from sobbing. Then the door closed with a bang and the street returned to its peaceful silence. The tiny man’s name was Max. The crowd in the club had held a retirement event for him. A teardrop of happiness rolled down his cheek. Under the moonlight, the teardrop appeared as a metallic silver spade. He strode down the street and started to hum a four-note tune like a hummingbird when it flutters its wings.

Suddenly he spotted an obsidian coloured fluffy object under one of the dim streetlights. He crept closer and saw that it was a stray dog. It was resting serenely. Max already had a dog and was in fact a dog fanatic. As he believed dogs were amiable and supportive, he didn’t give much consideration to his next move. He started to stroke the stray dog’s head. Suddenly the dog opened both its eyes and roughly scanned the area. The dog noticed the briefcase Max was gripping and stalked it like a soccer ball. The briefcase was stuffed with gifts and there was also a bone inside. Max immediately backed up, startled with fear. He saw the dog preparing to strike his briefcase so he ran off. He ran as fast as a rocket.

An intense chase began!

Max was running out of breath so he urgently needed to figure out a solution. He assumed that the dog wanted the bone all along. He slowed down and took lighter steps to catch his breath. Although Max’s energy was drained, the stray dog was still invigorated as if something had triggered it and set it to beast mode. The dog didn’t abate and came scrambling into Max. Max used one of his hands to cover his face while the other hand grabbed the bone. He managed to throw the bone in the direction of the dog then peeked between his fingers. He found the dog’s attention focused on the bone. He thought to himself, “Yes, it worked!” However, he had asserted too soon because the dog barked with enmity. It barked so loud that Max thought he had heard thunder. This made Max petrified with panic.

The dog locked its hazel coloured eyes on Max’s timid eyes. It glared with outrage. Max’s stomach cramp with alarm. The next thing Max knew was the dog had started biting and scratching Max and his briefcase. Max bolted to the side and dashed in a zigzag motion. This time Max’s strategy worked, but despite the dog was slightly befuddled, it quickly got used to the tactic and started to catch up. The deadly race commenced again!

After a while, Max broke into a jog because he felt like his legs were burning and turning into jelly. Max also felt a bit light-headed, but he had to protect his briefcase because all his precious gifts were in there. He turned to his briefcase and whispered, “I…I…I will pro… protect… you baby!” Although he was panting like crazy, he still kept his senses. Suddenly a gust of wind blew in the opposite direction of where Max and the dog were running. The gust of wind slammed into Max’s face, causing him to lose balance and collapse to the ground. The briefcase was undamaged but Max’s body was in pain due to the fall. As he landed on the ground, his wallet fell out of his business suit. He hastily picked it up.
For some reason, the dog didn’t get blown over and was still on its feet. The dog dashed towards the dazed Max which caught him off guard. Max screamed like a woman in a high-pitched voice. His eyes widened, his mouth opened. He stood up almost instantly. His legs shook with pain. He looked poorly. He never thought he would have been jump scared by a devilish dog. At that moment, a ten dollar note fell from his wallet. It floated to the ground. The dog spotted the cash and stopped attacking Max. The dog stared at the note like it had found true love. It licked the note, picked it up in its mouth and scurried away into the darkness, leaving Max in total confusion.

The rooster began to sing, the sun began to rise as the moon began to set. Max was still staring at the last spot he had seen the extraordinary dog. He managed to pull himself together. The scars on his legs and the scratches on his briefcase would remind him of the battle he had had. As he sluggishly walked back to his house, he only had one question in his mind - “Was that a gold-digger dog I saw?”
Dear Suki,

Hello Suki! I’m pleased that you appreciated the photos I had attached to my last email. Yes, my friends and I had a superb time at Disneyland. It looks like someone is envious!

I’m really astonished that you are coming to Hong Kong. My mind is currently exploding with ideas of things we can do together. Tell you what, I’m going to pick you and your family up at the airport! Although you can only stay in Hong Kong for four days, you are going to have a great time. As I always say, “Less is more”. Right? I will be your personal tour guide for the four days.

For the first day, I can take your whole family on a stroll around the most jam-packed regions of Hong Kong, Tsim Sha Tsui, to do shopping. However, the rule is that you must bring lots of money because there is a myriad of luxury brands on offer in the area. You can buy clothes, bags, watches, jewellery and much more. Occasionally, Tsim Sha Tsui can be very crammed with people so we will have to get to our destination by nudging aggressively. Therefore, make sure you take a good rest on the airplane to ensure enough energy to fight in the battlefield. By the way, not all the goods on offer are expensive so you don’t need to worry.

As for the second day, I will recommend eating in some well-known restaurants with your family. I will let you try a lot of traditional Chinese dishes. However, I am going to make it a surprise so I won’t name any of these restaurants in this email. You are going to be astonished.

As for the third day, I will introduce my parents to yours, and in the meantime we can chat and play at my house or even do some sports in the clubhouse of my residential estate. Sports I have in mind include: table tennis, badminton, and even swimming. I will also cook for your family that day as well. You can finally try my cooking! I swear we will have an amusing time.

For the fourth day, we will go to a place you’ve been looking forward to - Disneyland! I am saving the best for last. My family and yours will go to Disneyland together. I am already super pumped for the whole new adventure! We can watch some shows and finally, I can ride the amusement park rides with you. You’ve been saying how much you love those rides ever since we started sending emails to each other. This day will finally arrive! Before Disneyland closes for the evening, you will hear a bang and by then, look up at the sky. What you will see something that will simply amazes you, you may not even believe your eyes! You will witness a dazzling fireworks display blasting in the night sky. I’m sure it will create a spectacular scene. The combination of the fireworks and the accompanying music will fill everyone’s hearts with warmth. I’m sure it will be an irreplaceable experience.

You don’t need to bring anything special to Hong Kong, just some personal items should be fine as you will only be here for a few days. However, you can bring a colossal suitcase with you if you think you are going to purchase millions of things. If you still have any questions, you can ask me in your next email. Wish you the best!

Your friend,
Eugene
Dear Mike,

What’s going on, bro? Have you gotten used to the lifestyle in the US yet? I hope school has been going well for you. As for myself, the beginning of the first semester in my secondary school has been exciting yet demanding at the same time. Let me share with you my recent experience of going on a three-day expedition with my classmates.

The trip was a three-day excursion organized by the Scout Association of Malaysia. The camp site was located in the countryside of beautiful Malacca, which is approximately 30 miles away from Kuala Lumpur. Together with five teachers and a group of 30 students, we arrived there on a sunny morning two weeks ago.

As soon as we arrived at the camp site, we were each given a backpack with nothing but just a climbing harness and a rescue pack. To our surprise, there was no food provided, not even snacks or any biscuits! According to the briefing session before our departure, one of the challenges we had to face in the excursion was to look for our own food in order to survive during those three days. We had expected it to be challenging, but we had no idea that it was going to be THIS challenging.

As you may already know, we had been trained to survive in the wild during a two weeks intensive outbound training camp last summer. But it turned out that the trainings were nothing compared to the real deal! On the first day, we spent 10 hours just to hike to the camp. By the time we arrived at the camp site, the sun was already setting and we were all exhausted and starving. Luckily, the coaches told us that the food-hunting experience wouldn’t start until the second day and they kindly gave us some sandwiches and energy drinks for us to reenergize ourselves. After some rest, it was time for us to build our own tent so that we would have a shelter to sleep in. I shared my tent with one of our good friends, Ted, and we fell asleep immediately after everything was set up.

On the second day, I woke up with more than a dozen mosquito bites on my arms and legs. I guess Ted and I didn’t do a very good job with our tent, sigh... Anyways, after a quick breakfast with some bread and potatoes, we started working on the main task of the day, which was to hunt for food in groups. When we first heard of the task, we were all shocked as none of us were trained hunters. Fortunately, what the coaches meant by hunting was that we would have to do some tough trekking during the day to go to different checkpoints to get the food that had already been prepared for us. “This is not too bad,” I thought. However, the trekking part almost killed me! Not only did we have to do a lot of climbing, but we also had to be exposed to the fierce sunshine the whole day. By the time we finally managed to collect all our food from the checkpoints, our legs were already burning and some of us even got blisters on our feet. Luckily, after the tough trek and hunt, our coaches gave us plenty of time to rest on the beach next to the camping area to enjoy the sunset while eating the food that we struggled for all day long.

The third day and also the last day was, thankfully, a lot easier compared to the first day. Our main task was just to build a boat using Chinese bamboos. It was not too difficult for us as the coaches gave us very clear instructions and helped us along the process. The day ended with a campfire and talent performances by each group.
Although it was a very tough journey, I cherish the experience a lot because I got to learn about the importance of persistence. I now feel a lot more confident about myself when I encounter daunting challenges.

If you ever get the opportunity to do something like this too, don’t hesitate and sign up for it! Trust me, you will not regret your decision!

I’m looking forward to hearing back from you, my homie!

Yours,
Brandon
The First Letter to a New Friend
1F Jones Ng

Dear Chris,

Hello, how are you? I’m glad to know we will be introducing ourselves to each other in this letter.

My name is Jones Ng and I am a 12-year-old boy. I live in Hong Kong. My hobbies are travelling around the world, watching TV and playing sports. I love visiting other countries so much that I travel four times a year, and my favourite country is Thailand. Bangkok is the capital city of Thailand and it is always very crowded. But the food there is super delicious so I think you will love it too.

I don’t have any brothers or sisters and I am the only child in my family. My mother is a travel consultant and my dad is a policeman. We have lots of common interests, like shopping, cooking and cycling. Therefore, we enjoy family time a lot.

Now, I’m going to introduce my school. My school is Pui Ching Middle school, which is one of the oldest schools in Hong Kong. We are going to celebrate our 130th anniversary next year. I’m proud of myself that I can go to this amazing school. I enjoy my school life very much as there are more than 30 clubs and societies for us to take part in different extra-curricular activities. Moreover, we have a lot of freedom and can sometimes use tablet computers or smartphones to learn during lessons. It is fun! I love my class and I love our English lessons. Yesterday, I wrote a poem during English lesson.

Jones
I am a 12-year-old boy
No sister or brother
I like to cook with mother
And care about my dad’s weather
I fear homework
But they give me support
And remind me what I have been taught
I am from Hong Kong
Ng

Ha! It’s my first poem. Do you like it? I hope I can know more about you and your country. Do write to me. Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,
Jones
Doing the Right Thing
2A Natalie Cheng

On 15th January, George was driving towards Fanling. He saw a young man and his dog standing near a bend. The young man was wearing a cardigan and looked very pale. He seemed ill and was trembling. “Can I have a lift?” the young man asked. As George was afraid he might be too ill, he nodded.

The young man got on the car and asked if the driver could take him to Fanling. George replied yes and started the car and continued driving. After a few minutes, George felt cold so he turned off the air conditioner. He asked the young man if he was cold but he only answered “No” in a deep voice. After driving for a short distance, George began shivering. He realized something might be wrong but kept on driving. The headlights were sparkling and the mechanical sound built a strange ambience.

When George arrived at Fanling, he turned his head back, wanting to tell the young man that they had arrived. To his surprise, the young man and his dog disappeared! George was shocked and immediately went to the police office. He was scared and has even forgotten to take his car key.

When he arrived at the police office, he was afraid that the sergeant might laugh at him for the incident but still told him what had happened. However, after the sergeant heard the details and location of this bizarre event, he was stunned and took out a newspaper slowly. The headline was “Man and Dog Killed near Road”. George immediately recognized the man who was mentioned in the newspaper, he was his passenger who had disappeared. It was said that the young man and the dog had been killed one week ago at exactly the same bend on the road.

It took some time for George to feel relieved after the strange happenings. As an afterthought, he comforted himself that anyway it was a good deed. One should not be scared for doing the right thing.
A Selfish Decision
2A Gabriel Ma

“Voom Voom!” Charles was driving his black Audi A4 towards Fanling at midnight. He saw a man, who was tall and thin, standing with his dog near a bend.

The man asked, “Can I have a lift?” Charles thought that the man and the dog seemed friendly so he let them in. Charles started the car and continued driving to Fanling. “What is your name, sir?” Charles asked politely. “My name was Tom and my cute dog was called Peter. Nice to meet you.” Tom replied. “He ‘was’? Maybe grammar of this man is bad.” Charles thought. They continued chatting happily during the ride to Fanling.

Charles thought the temperature inside the car was very low, so he asked Tom, “Tom, may I turn off the air conditioner and open the windows? I am very cold.” Tom didn’t reply, and his face became pale. “I was Tom, I was Tom, I was Tom…” Tom talked to himself quietly. “Boom!” Suddenly, the sky became darker and there were thunder and storm. It became colder and colder inside the car. “What is Tom doing? Is he crazy?” Charles thought. Charles was scared and he wanted Tom to leave but they were on the highway, so he speeded up and hoped that they would arrive at Fanling as soon as possible.

After thirty minutes, they arrived. “Tom, we have arrived at Fanling, please leave. I need to return home quickly.” Charles said. There was no reply from Tom. “Tom? Tom? Are you sleeping?” Charles yelled. There was still no reply from Tom. “Oh, I shouldn’t have let them get in my car.” Charles whispered to himself. “Tom, if you don’t leave now, I will call the police immediately. Please leave now!” He shouted loudly.

Charles looked back to the seats where Tom and Peter sat, there was...nothing! Charles was shocked and scared. “It is impossible! Maybe I am just dreaming.” Charles said to himself. He rubbed his eyes and he looked to the seats where Tom and Peter sat, Tom and Peter had really disappeared! “Well, I am in trouble…” Charles thought. He was scared and he immediately went to the police station.

After a few minutes, Charles arrived at the police station. He told the police sergeant what had happened. Charles thought he would laugh at him. However, the sergeant showed him a newspaper from a week ago. The headline was “Man and Dog Killed on Road by a Truck”. Charles saw Tom and Peter at exactly the same bend on the road!

“Mr. Charles, perhaps your passengers were ghosts!” The sergeant said. Charles was shocked, how was it possible? He was trembling, and suddenly recalled that on that night of the accident, after having some wine, he was driving along the same road and saw someone lying on the ground and moaning. He didn’t stop to help because he didn’t want to be caught for driving under the influence of alcohol. Now he realized that he could have saved that man’s life if he wasn’t so selfish.
Food Sharing Festival
2A Ding SiQing

There is a special festival in Hong Kong called The Food Sharing Festival. It is held on 1st April every year and is a chance for people to know that the diversities of food can cultivate people’s awareness of environmental protection.

On this festival, people do not need to go to work and children do not need to go to school either. All they need to do is stay at home and create new kinds of food of different tastes. There are many different kinds of cuisine to be chosen: Western cuisine, Chinese cuisine, Thai cuisine, Indonesian cuisine and so on. All the parks and stadiums in Hong Kong will be open on that day so people can bring their own food there and try different cuisine from different countries. In this festival, people can learn different food cultures and share their opinions on food.

Adults and children are recommended to wear clothes related to food, and they need to wear gloves and aprons while they are trying the food. Out of fairness, everyone should exchange their food with others - eating others’ food with no remuneration is not allowed. People also have to prepare tableware, or there will be a large amount of disposable product waste. After the event, people must clean up the parks.

This festival also aims to let people show their love to people who need help. On that day, there will be many rescue stations for homeless people or those who do not have food. Adults can teach their children to help others such as bringing leftover food to the rescue stations or nursing home. Some donation boxes will be placed outside the parks and the money collected will be sent to charity.

Through this festival, people will have more knowledge about various cuisine and dining traditions, it also calls people’s attention to social issues. I hope this festival will let people enjoy palatable food as well as the pleasure of helping others.
Pancake Festival
2A Kelly Shum

Pancake Festival is a public holiday in Hong Kong. It is a special day for everyone and takes place on 3rd March every year. It was started by Miriam Wong in 2000. She thought that everyone should have a day to relax and enjoy delicious pancakes. Everyone loves this festival.

On this day, restaurants give away free pancakes to children, and adults can get 50% discount on the purchase of any pancakes. Everyone should have at least one pancake for breakfast. Some chefs will also make new-style pancakes for people to try without having to pay. There are even drinks which taste like pancakes for free!

There are also cooking competitions in some shopping malls. The one who can make the tastiest and the most creative pancake will win. The winner will receive 500 dollars as the prize. Actually, most pancakes are tasty but some are not creative enough. I have even seen children interested in this competition too.

Some people share pancakes with strangers on that day, and they exchange their pancakes so that they can try different flavours. Children should learn how to make pancakes and cook for their parents in order to let them have more time to relax. Some of them even write stories on pancakes for a writing competition. Even though there is no prize, the writers still enjoy it very much.

In the evening, people all dress up as pancakes and compare with each other. There are even some shows in Ocean Park and Disneyland where dancers all dress up like pancakes and make people laugh.

I think this festival is a great day for people to relax and have fun. Everyone should do the same thing and have a great time. What a good day it is!
The Terrible Career Week
2B Leo Chim

In July, I joined a career scheme organized by the school. The aim of the program is to let us have practical working experience. It was a two-week scheme and I chose to become a waiter. As I was timid, shy and afraid of communicating with strangers, I hoped that these two weeks would turn me into an outgoing person.

I was assigned to work in a high-end western restaurant in Central. It is extremely famous and its manager is interviewed by different media like newspapers, magazines and websites. An alumnus of my school owned the place, so I could have a chance to work there. My main duties were to take customers’ orders, make daily recommendations to them and serve the dishes. The whole restaurant was filled with a floral smell, a flower decoration was set on every table. Besides, I enjoyed the aroma of the scrumptious food made using expensive ingredients. Live romantic jazz music was played by a pianist. The restaurant was always fully booked and customers were dressed elegantly to enjoy the meal there. Everything was so good until one day.

It was just another usual busy day, I was taking an order from a couple who were celebrating their anniversary. A man wearing a polo shirt sat down right next to the couple. He looked shy and suspicious. He ordered a set lunch with soup, salad, a steak and a slice of tiramisu cake. When his meal was ready, I served him with his lobster soup. Out of the blue, he took out a dead cockroach from his bag and put it into his soup in no time. My instinct told me to record it, I took out my phone and started recording what he was doing. After that, I showed the video to my manager. He was shocked to see such evil behavior and said he would investigate it. He then asked me to continue my duty and pretend nothing had happened. After lunch time, my manager asked me to go to his office. To my shock, ‘You are fired, don’t come back tomorrow,’ he said in anger. I was speechless. I decided to post the video on Facebook and it went viral. It was even on the newspaper headline the next day.

The next day back at school, the disciplinary teacher called upon me, he handed me a major demerit because I had ruined not only the reputation of the restaurant but also the school’s. I couldn’t comprehend what was happening. The disciplinary teacher explained that the customer was actually the owner of the restaurant testing his own employees. He wanted to see how they would react when such an emergency happened. The event went out of hand when I uploaded the video. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is now shutting down the restaurant. It was my reckless behaviour that caused this disaster.

On top of the major demerit, my parents grounded me and banned me from going out with my friends. I realized I was too impulsive. This is the worst week ever!
Letter of Complaint – The All-Inclusive Package
2B Jessie Ho

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Complaint about a Guided Tour to Japan

A week ago, I joined an all-inclusive tour from 7 - 12 August to Japan to celebrate my birthday. Your company is renowned for organizing top quality tours around the world, however I was utterly disappointed with the service. Therefore, I am writing to file a complaint about the substandard tour held by your company.

First and foremost, your tour guide was not professional. The leaflet claims that a tour guide will be with us throughout the whole tour and a Japanese translator will offer a helping hand when needed. During the 5-day tour, I could hardly see the Japanese translator when we needed translation for shopping and sightseeing. We were so desperate. Your ‘professional’ tour guide asked us for tips whenever we asked for help and forced us to shop in a souvenir shop. That was clearly unprofessional and his behavior is totally unacceptable.

What’s more, your package promised that we would stay in a 5-star hotel which offers king-sized bed, top-quality facilities and buffet breakfast. Sadly, we just stayed in a motel. The room was in poor condition and was unhygienic. To make matters worse, the breakfast they provided was just a slice of bread and a cup of milk. My family was starving when we were hiking and sightseeing on and around the Mountain Fuji! After the hike, we were all freezing and exhausted. When we wanted to take a hot bath at the motel, there was no hot water supply! We had to take a cold shower under the freezing cold weather. The motel room was tiny, the five of us had to share one single bed and a toilet. This is totally far from our expectation.

On top of that, the transportation your travel agent arranged was far below standard. Instead of travelling by train and shuttle bus, we were walking from one landmark to another. We were out of breath walking between the motel and the destinations. It took us one and a half hours to walk to the nearest tourist spot. We were even expected to spend 4 hours walking back and forth to the outlet in Osaka! At last, we had to pay the transportation fee all by ourselves!

The service and arrangement your company had provided is beyond acceptance. If I do not get an explanation and a full refund from you, I shall take my customers elsewhere in the future. I will also consider taking further steps by forwarding the case to the Consumer Council. Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,
Jessie Ho
Manic Monday
2C Charmaine Hui

It was Monday. The most hated day of the week. I woke up thinking it would be the same, old, boring Monday, like all of my past Mondays. Little did I know, I would be completely wrong. Things were going to get a little more eventful today.

“I’m late! I’m late! I’m LATE!!” I mentally screamed to myself as I dashed towards my classroom as fast as my 13-year-old legs could carry me. The time was currently 7:55am and I could see my homeroom teacher walking up the stairs from the corner of my eye. I hastily turned around a corner and crashed into a woman. The two of us nearly fell down but I grabbed onto a handrail and the lady did, too. She looked like she wanted to scold me but I muttered a quick “Sorry!” and sprinted down the hallway.

I burst into my loud, chatter-filled classroom and practically flew towards my seat. The whole class suddenly got very quiet and almost every one of my classmates was gaping at me. My panting seemed to have amplified by ten times and after a few seconds of silence and stillness, my classmates burst into laughter. I furrowed my eyebrows as a boy asked, “Why are you sitting on Charmaine’s seat?” and snickered. I looked around my classroom and was suddenly aware of a pale pink bag sitting on my right shoulder. It had replaced my schoolbag. I then caught my reflection in the window, Mrs. Mak’s confused look stared back at me. I gave out a shriek and my classmates’ laughter increased.

“I – I was just chillin’ …” I tried to speak in Mrs. Mak’s ‘tough’ voice, which I failed at dismally, and I quickly grabbed the pale pink bag and ran out of the classroom, trying to suppress the embarrassed flush on my face. I went to the washroom and took a look in the mirror. I really looked like Mrs. Mak. I quickly dug into the bag and pulled out what looked like a day planner.

Walking towards the English staffroom, I opened up the planner and peeked inside. “How am I supposed to teach Form 5 students English, huh?!” I asked myself in sheer disbelief. I flipped to the next page and saw a whole work list. I squinted at a tiny sentence, which reads “Grade Form 6 tests”. I sighed heavily at my bad luck and a highlighted sentence caught my eye. “Must go to eat with the Principal at lunch…” I read. “Wait! What?! – ”

“Whatever.” I huffed as I reached the English staffroom. Quickly scanning the seat arrangements, I opened the door and tried to copy the way Mrs. Mak walks. “Looking a little awkward here …” I thought as I almost tripped over a stack of papers. The teachers pretended they didn’t see me as I stumbled my way to Mrs. Mak’s seat.

Mrs. Mak has quite a reputation here. I thought, “Oh that’s too bad. I’m probably going to ruin it in one day.” I looked at Mrs. Mak’s timetable and it said that I had a free period at that moment. A little relieved, I opened a textbook and started to prepare for the next lesson, which was Form 1 History with class 1A. Inserting the strawberry-looking USB into the computer, I found a PowerPoint entitled ‘The Paleolithic Age’. I opened the PowerPoint and tried to memorise it. I also graded some Form 2 papers.

Soon, the bell rang. It was time for me to go and teach a class. “How on Earth?!” I thought to myself as I swallowed nervously. A small bead of sweat trickled down my cheek as I stepped into 1A’s classroom. A girl in the back row called “Stand up!” and the whole class went “Good morning Mrs. Mak!” I did my best impression of Mrs. Mak and said “Good morning dear.” in the most teacher-like way.
possible. I inserted the USB into the computer and a voice from the back of my head said, “You need to take attendance, idiot.”

I fumbled around in the bag, pulled out the notebook, and quickly searched for the password. Typing it in, I clicked around randomly to find the right buttons. Finally, after fifteen minutes of searching, I finished taking attendance and opened the PowerPoint. I took a deep breath and stuttered, “T– today, we will be learning about the, uh, P– Paleolithic Age. Please open your book to page…” I squinted at the tiny number written on the notebook “— six.”

A hand shot up in the air and I said, “Yes?” The student stood up and said, “We’ve already covered Paleolithic Age, Mrs. Mak.” Cold sweat threatened to slide down my forehead as I tried to stay calm. “We have advanced to the Neolithic Age,” the student continued, pushing up his glasses. I immediately closed the PowerPoint and tried to find the Neolithic Age PowerPoint. The ‘Glasses Boy’ sat down as I opened the new PowerPoint.

But it was blank! “Gah!” I gasped. The students started to throw rotten tomatoes at me as I ducked under the teacher’s desk for refuge.

“What on Earth!” I yelled as a shoe hit my arm. Panicking, I stood up, banged my head under the desk and was out cold.

I woke to the sound of my alarm beeping annoyingly. I sat up groggily and found myself on my bed, with cold sweat all over my face, blankets thrashed, hair a mess, and heart pounding. Fumbling around for my glasses, I stood up, put them on, and stretched.

I looked at my messy bed, and joked, “Goodbye, my love.” as I always do. My mother greeted me, “It’s a great Monday morning, isn’t it?”

Thank goodness. It was a dream.
Letter of Complaint to Apple (HK)

2A Ines Lau

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Defective 15-inch MacBook Pro

10 days ago, I purchased a MacBook Pro from your online store. To be more precise, I purchased a 15-inch MacBook Pro. It was delivered today as guaranteed, but to my surprise as I opened the package, I instantly found that there were three problems. Therefore, I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the lack of quality of the product sent to me by your store.—

First and foremost, the MacBook Pro had numerous scratches on the screen, logo and surface of the on/off button. The scratches on the screen blocked images on the MacBook. I tried to touch the screen to do some gaming through different apps, however, some of the scratches were affecting the icons which made them unreadable. To make things worse, some of the scratches were extremely large, which made the screen almost impossible to use. I can assume that this product was not delivered in a proper manner because all products from your store are advertised as brand new. A new product should not possess scratches or have an unjolly appearance. In addition, there were many fingerprints all over the MacBook Pro, making the laptop very dirty. I suspect the MacBook Pro sent to me was a display model and not a new device.

What’s more, I attempted to log into the WI-FI system, however, I couldn’t access any online apps such as Safari, Google Chrome or even an online dictionary. The WI-FI simply blocked my access to the Internet. This was unusual because all my other devices, including my 2016 MacBook Pro can easily access the Internet. I called your customer service to see if there was an issue with the settings. Unfortunately, the assistant told me that it was my mistake, as they had never adjusted any settings. To add fuel to the fire, the assistant didn’t even let me finish my question on where to locate the settings for the WI-FI in the manual before hanging up the phone rudely. This shocked me and later made me depressed. In fact, I was disgusted at the poor level of customer service offered by your company. To inflame things further, the MacBook Pro then started to glitch for no reason. I tried to repair the problem by following the manual and later used a preinstalled app called Disk Utility. However, neither worked.

On top of all this, I found out that the instruction manual wasn’t even for a MacBook Pro, but for an iMac. I dialed the number to your main office hoping to resolve these problems for once and for all. Your staff picked up, at which point I complained about the problems I was experiencing, yet the person on the other end simply responded with an “uh – huh”. He then hung up without any attempt to resolve my grievances.

I am profoundly disappointed with my purchase. Therefore, I demand an explanation with a full refund. Also, I would like to return this product to your company. I look forward to a quick resolution of this situation.

Yours sincerely,

Ines Lau
The 2-Hour Torture in My Life
2C Charmaine Tong

“Mum and Dad, I’m sorry. You’ve already told me not to sit next to the window but I didn’t listen. I’m sorry!” I cried after that 2-hour torture in my life.

Those 2 hours were really tough. As usual, I was lying on my bed using my smart phone, but suddenly I heard a loud noise—“Crack!” And I felt a gust of strong wind sucking everything away including my phone. I was so terrified. I tried to escape but didn’t know why my legs didn’t have the strength to stand up.

Then I felt that the pain was spreading from my legs and invading my whole body. It was so painful. Perhaps my legs were hurt by that broken window’s shards. I grabbed onto my desk and tried to pull myself out of my room to find a usable phone to dial 999.

I successfully found a phone so I ignored everything else and rushed towards it, but at the same time my legs were bleeding more and more seriously. I picked up the phone and dialed 999. I kept asking myself, “Why isn’t there any sound?” I took a look at the phone, and it said “No Battery”! I felt so helpless and started to feel a bit dizzy. I kept yelling, “Please, can anybody help me? Help me please, please!” The pain was getting worse that I couldn’t even move my legs anymore.

At that hopeless moment, I suddenly thought, “How about knocking at my neighbour’s door and ask for help?” But I couldn’t walk. When I looked back, what I saw was a broken table and there was blood everywhere. Then I grabbed the two legs of the broken wooden table and tried to pull myself to my neighbour’s home. It felt a bit like skiing. I tried to open my door but the door handle was a bit too high for me to reach, so I used all my strength to push myself up.

The door opened. But then, a piece of wood pierced my tummy. It was so painful. “Ouch!” I cried loudly. I felt so dizzy and I was having difficulty breathing because of the massive blood loss. My neighbour rushed out from her door and saw me lying on the floor with blood everywhere. And I told her, “Please, call the ambulance for me.”

After the call, she told me that the ambulance would arrive 30 minutes later. At that point, my eyelids were very heavy, I tried very hard to keep myself conscious and kept on telling myself, “I will be fine, it’s okay. I won’t die as long as I don’t close my eyes. The ambulance is coming and I’ll be sent to the hospital soon.” My wounds were bleeding very hard so I borrowed some wet towels from my neighbour to press onto my wounds to avoid more blood loss.

10 minutes later, the ambulance arrived. The rescue team saved me and brought me into the hospital where my parents were working. They told me that I was so brave. When we arrived at the hospital, my parents rushed towards me and said, “Oh, poor you! We worried about you so badly!” I apologized that I didn’t listen to them. I’ve learned that I should always listen to my parents and I need to be aware of what is happening beside me instead of only looking at my phone in the future.
Letter of Advice – The School Swap Journey
2C Kary Zee

Dear Tommy,

How’s your day during the School Swap journey in Seoul? Hope you are doing well. I’ve heard that you feel depressed from facing long hours of studies and defeated in doing GCSE papers. I’m sorry to hear about these setbacks. I know that the Korean school life is drastically different from the life you have in Wales, so let me give you some advice that can help release your stress and solve these problems.

It is usually a good idea to find a short period of time to sit down and listen to some light music quietly. This may seem a bit weird but it really can help relieve your pressure as listening to soothing music can relax and quiet your mind, as well as our body muscles. It can also slow down your breathing so you might feel better. This method always works for me. I do this before sleeping almost every day. I feel really relaxed and it seems that all my stress and trouble disappears at that time.

Spending more time in nature might work too! It may be hard for you to achieve it but you can try to go to the garden at your school during recess, lunchtime or afterschool to breathe in more fresh air. This can help focus your mind, release your stress and calm you down. The main reason why you always feel sleepy during lessons is perhaps the bad air circulation in the classroom, making it harder for your body to absorb oxygen. Getting in touch with nature might help you a bit since my friends and I often use this way to keep ourselves awake when facing long hours of study and it does have a certain effect.

At last, I know you cannot adapt to the teaching methods in Korea where teachers give you lots of information in one go which may be difficult for you to absorb everything immediately. To solve this problem, whenever you come across something you don’t understand, ask your classmates and teachers promptly. Don’t feel embarrassed! It would be easier for you to remember knowledge that you manage to understand, and you will feel more capable when you do the GCSE papers again.

Don’t give up and don’t be discouraged. Continue this School Swap journey as it will really help you a lot. It’s a great chance for you to learn and improve yourself. Talk to me if you have any problems. Remember I’m always by your side! Keep it up!

Love,
Chris
Letter of Complaint – The Unsatisfactory Service
2D Justin Chan

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: Complaint about the Unsatisfactory Service Related to My Laptop Purchase at Your Online Store

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the subpar service I received when buying my laptop in your store a few weeks ago.

My first complaint concerns the delivery time of the laptop. I was promised a delivery time of no more than one week after placing the order online. However, I only received the product after two additional weeks. It is dishonest and wrongful to promise a delivery time that your store could not keep.

My second complaint concerns the fact that after receiving my laptop, for no apparent reason, it did not function properly as per your product manual. Aside from a couple of keys not registering on the keyboard, the display was also partially shattered. I am disappointed.

My third complaint concerns the lack of support at your customer service hotline. Your company claimed that the hotline was a 24-hour hotline, meaning that, technically, one should be able to talk to a customer service officer at anytime of the day. Unfortunately, this was not the case when I called. I tried to call but there was no response. It is unacceptable that you could not live up to what you have promised.

My fourth complaint concerns the attitude and lack of basic courtesy of your frontline staff. To put it into context, when I brought in my faulty laptop to your local outlet after receiving no support from your hotline, the staff treated me impolitely. When I was trying to explain my issues to him, and before I had even finished my sentence, I was rudely interrupted and brushed off. I was outrageous about how your staff treated the customers.

I demand a full refund or a replacement of the laptop within a week. If not, I will lodge a complaint to the Consumer Council or take legal action. Apart from this, it is clear that improvement is urgently needed regarding customer support at your store. I recommend re-training your frontline staff on the proper manner. I look forward to seeing the improvement and hearing from you.

Regards,
Chris
On a boring, mundane summer Sunday afternoon, I was going home by the MTR. That was ordinary until my eyes caught a glimpse of a flyer on the window which read ‘Spend A Day with Your fapplication form went.

A few days later, I got a phone call stating that I had won. My idol and I then got hooked up and were scheduled to meet at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, Charlotte, North Carolina.

He wasn’t a high-key celebrity at all. We walked to Carolina Aviation Museum located inside the airport. Let me give you some hints as to who he was. He was the captain on US Airways Flight 1549, which suffered an uncontained engine failure on the Airbus A320 at a very low altitude. He assessed the situation rapidly and made a successful landing on the Hudson River. The flight was scheduled to arrive at Charlotte Airport and that was why we were arranged to meet there for a symbolic reason.

As we arrived, we were drawn to the main attraction of the museum, the exact plane that landed on a river, also known as the ‘N10GUS’ (the aircraft’s registration number). I, being a young and inspired aviation enthusiast, asked him a bunch of questions on the incident. Unlike a formal interview, we only had a casual conversation as if we were friends.

“How did you feel when you saw the ECAM displaying dual engine failure?” I asked.

“I don’t really recall the details unfortunately but I remember it being just traumatic,” he answered.

“Wow, that must have been a routine flight with great weather along the way. The view of the Hudson (River) was gorgeous that day.”

“Yeah. If I were you, I would have been caught off-guard as well. Have you experienced anything remotely similar to this incident in your 30 years of civil aviation career?”

“Nothing quite like that. This was my first flight involving an emergency.”

“I’m amazed! One would never assume a pilot can do what you did without any prior experience. No offence, Captain.”

“Aha! I know what you mean, don’t worry.”

We talked nonstop for a good three hours whilst walking around in the museum. We had a stellar time together, but it was practically nothing compared to what we did in the afternoon.

After having an amazing lunch, we set off to American Airlines Training Centre, also in Charlotte. We got hooked up because as mentioned before, he was a captain for the US Airways which got hired by American Airlines a few years after the incident. When we got there, we headed for the A320 full-motion flight simulator, the type of aircraft my dear captain specialised in. He taught me
how to interpret a lot of the information one could observe from the six EFIS (Electric Flight Instrument System) panels. In addition, he did a LOFT (Line-oriented Flight Training) to simulate a real flight, from LaGuardia Airport (KLGA/LGA) to Charlotte Douglas International Airport (KCLT/CLT) with the flight number of... you guessed it, US Airways Flight 1549! And I had to emphasize that there would not be any engine failures. It was an inexplicable learning experience and really opened my eyes on how real-life pilots fly.

Somewhat, I suppose because I played flight simulators before, the captain let me land the plane, and we ended up buttering the bread (a common metaphor in aviation for ‘smooth landings’) on runway 18 (with a CAT 1 ILS/DME approach at Charlotte)! What an accomplishment! Captain told me that I had a lot of potential awaiting to be unleashed. It was such a nice compliment. We then headed back to the airport for an evening flight to Hong Kong.

On my way back, a lot was going on in my mind. I was savouring my memory during my short stay with the Captain. It was lucky of me to meet... (ready for it?) Captain Chesley Sullenberger. And I wished him the best after crossing one of his biggest thresholds in life - retirement. Yes, he is retired now.
Letter of Complaint – The Unsatisfactory Service
2D Miriam Chang

Dear Manager,

Re: Complaint about the Unsatisfactory Services from Online Electronics Store

I am writing to complain about the dissatisfying delivery, hotline and customer services I received when purchasing the Black Lenovo MK43 series from your online store.

My first complaint is about the late delivery of the product. The laptop was supposed to arrive on 4th October, but instead on the guaranteed date, I received a call telling me that the shipment went wrong and my product was mistakenly shipped to England. However, I was not told when the product would arrive. I tried to call the number ten days later, but the reply was that the product had arrived Hong Kong but would take another two days before it would be delivered to my address. At the end, I could not believe that I had to wait patiently for ten more days. It is irresponsible of your company to deliver the product twenty days late.

My next complaint concerns the malfunctioning laptop itself. When the product finally arrived, another problem occurred. The box was damaged and the laptop was covered with scratches and dents. I was not able to turn the laptop on. At the same time, the mouse that came with it could not be plugged in. I felt really disappointed as both the shipping and the product was substandard.

My third complaint is about the 24-hour customer service hotline. I called the hotline during office hours and expected someone to answer my enquiries. However, no one was on the phone. I dialled a few more times, but to my astonishment, no one answered. I was not even directed to an answering machine to leave a voice message.

The last complaint is about the improper manner of your staff in the frontline. As I have mentioned above that the hotline did not work, I had no choice but pay a visit to the outlet of your shop. I explained my situation and asked one of your staff members to give me a replacement or a refund politely. However, all he did was glare at me and said that I was the one to be blamed for all the problems, and even used vulgar words to turn me away. This was totally unacceptable.

I demand a full refund and a written apology within one week. If not, I will lodge a complaint to the Consumer Council.

Yours faithfully,

Chris
An Unforgettable Encounter
2D Chong Kui Fung

On 15th January, Peter was driving towards Fanling because he needed to visit his grandma’s grave. While he was driving, he saw a young man wearing a black T-shirt and black pants. He was thin, tall and had a very pale face with very long black hair covering his face. He also had a big furry dog with him. The dog had sharp teeth but had lost his tail. The young man stopped the car and asked Peter, “Can I have a lift?” Peter answered, “Yes, sure, jump in.” When the young man and the dog got into the car, Peter asked, “Where do you want to go to?” The young man answered, “I want to go to Fanling’s graveyard to visit someone.”

When Peter was driving, he asked the young man, “What is your name?” The young man answered, “I don’t know.” Peter was surprised, but after that he saw something even more surprising, for he couldn’t see the young man and the dog’s reflection in the mirror! However, he thought to himself that he might have just been too tired. The young man was shivering and sweating, sometimes he said he was too cold, other times he said he was too hot. The dog was also shivering and sweating. Peter asked, “Are you having a fever, let me check your temperature.” So he stopped and checked the young man’s temperature, it was 0°C! Peter was shocked and did it again, but it was still the same. Peter was terrified but continued driving.

After a short while, they finally arrived in Fanling. Peter said, “We’re in Fanling.” But when he looked back he found that the young man and the dog had disappeared. He was terrified and rushed to the police station. He told the police officer what had happened. The police officer laughed at him and thought he was crazy at first. But as he took out a newspaper, Peter saw a report saying, “A young man and a dog crushed and killed by a truck near Fanling.” The police officer gasped, “Perhaps your passengers were ghosts!”

In this happening, Peter learned that life is fragile, so he should enjoy living in this world while he is still alive and cherish the time he spends with his family.
No Mobile Phone Day
2D Tang Chun Yin

No Mobile Phone Day is a public holiday in Hong Kong. It takes place on the first Monday of every month. Nowadays Hong Kong people use mobile phones for more than 3 hours per day, and they use them not only for communication, but also for playing games and watching videos. Some people are even addicted to them. That’s why, Chun Yin started this day in 2000. Not only should mobile phones be put away, other electronic devices, such as iPads, computers, laptops and so on, should also be switched off.

On this day, people attend outdoor activities with families and friends, and students have to hand in a report. Not only can the report shows what the student did, but also helps to improve his/her writing skills. Besides, citizens can use different facilities in the public sport complex for free on the day. They are also encouraged to breathe in some fresh air in the country side with friends as well.

At restaurants, including buffets, offer special discounts to those who have their electronic devices untouched during the meal, and customers can get free drinks or desserts afterwards. Some places might even provide board games and card games so people can stay longer and have more face-to-face contact with their friends and family.

Sport competitions, such as basketball, badminton and volleyball, are held on the sports grounds of different places. People can form into groups by themselves and the winning teams are awarded with Disneyland or Ocean Park tickets!

At first, people may feel a bit empty, but as the day unfolds, they will find something of greater importance that they have been missing for a long time. What a wonderful day!
One day, when Mr. Chan was driving towards Fanling, he saw a brown, medium-sized dog and its young master. They were standing near a bend. The young man was about 20-25 years old. He was wearing a black shirt and brown, long pants. He carried a smile on his face and he seemed friendly. “Excuse me, mister, I forgot my wallet and I can’t go home, can I have a lift?” the young man asked. He then told Mr. Chan to go to Fanling. Mr. Chan started the car and continued driving.

When the young man was in the car, Mr. Chan felt a surge of cold air coming from the young man, it was so cold that the windows started to get foggy. On the way, the young man asked, “Have you seen the newspaper last week, a man and dog were killed near the road, I really hope it wasn’t us that were in the accident.” Mr. Chan answered, “Yes, I have heard. Do you feel cold?” “No, not at all.” replied the young man. At this point, Mr. Chan started to feel suspicious about his passengers.

When Mr. Chan reached Fanling, he turned back to tell them that they have arrived, but to his surprise, the young man and the dog had disappeared! Mr. Chan was shocked. He immediately went to the police station, and on the way, he thought, “Who would believe an old man like me telling a story about a disappearing man and dog? They would think that I’m crazy!” Mr. Chan said, smiling coldly.

When he arrived, he was worried that the sergeant might laugh at him. However, after Mr. Chan explained the whole thing to him, the sergeant showed Mr. Chan the newspaper from a week ago, the one that the young man had mentioned. It said that the man and the dog in Mr. Chan’s car had been killed at the exact same bend on the road where Mr. Chan picked them up. The sergeant said, “Perhaps your passengers were ghosts!”

After this incident, Mr. Chan realized that life is very fragile, and he should spend more time with his loved ones when they are still alive and healthy to avoid any regrets when it is too late.
The Dog Festival
2D Cheryl Liu

The Dog Festival is a special festival in Hong Kong. All the dogs look forward to this unique day. It takes place on the eighteenth of March every year, started by Yiu Lok Ching in 2010. She thought that all dog owners were always busy and didn’t have enough time to play or stay with their dogs. Therefore, she created this festival.

On this day, students do not need to go to school and adults do not need to work either. As a result, dog owners can take their dogs for a wonderful walk. They can go to the Doggy’s Park without having to pay. In the Doggy’s Park, there are some dog trainers who hold parties for dogs. In the party, owners and their children can play happily with their dogs. Dogs can also make friends with others. There is also a buffet for dogs in the party so they can enjoy different kinds of treats.

On the streets, you will see everyone dress up like dogs, a vet or a groomer. Also, when you bring your dog to any pet shop, the pet shop will give away food, kennels, sheds, treats, leashes, toys, collars, brushes and dog dishes for free. Breeders can also receive a 60% discount when they bring their dog to the groomer.

At the Dog Festival, there is a huge competition for dogs. Owners need to dress their dogs up and the most beautiful or handsome dog will win. A poodle won the champion of last year’s competition. It is quite fun and interesting.

After the Dog Festival, every school holds a lecture about how to care for dogs from a puppy mill, and what we should consider before owning a dog.

The Dog Festival is indeed a very special day. It is full of fun as dogs can really enjoy the day to play and eat. It also teaches us that although we are so busy, we can’t forget about our pets at our home. It is likely that our pets miss us very much when we go to school or work.
The 2-Hour Torture in My Life
2E Elizabeth Chan

As medical staff, my mom and dad went to work urgently in the morning because of the super typhoon, Mangkhut. Since my parents were out, I stayed at home by myself. Feeling a bit tired, I jumped onto my bed and lay down to rest.

Not long after, my smartphone beeped and a message appeared. “The Hong Kong Observatory has issued a No. 10 signal, and has urged people to stay indoors and away from windows. Typhoon Mangkhut is a super typhoon, which can smash Hong Kong and cause extensive damage and flooding.” After receiving the message, I felt calm and peaceful because I was lying cozily on my comfy bed with my smartphone and teddy bear. When I finished checking all of my messages, I clicked into my favourite game and started to play. Meanwhile, the wind outside was gaining momentum and starting to roar like a lion. I smelled a rat. I glimpsed outside, but felt really frightened by the gust because I saw the rain swooshing and signboards tilting. I was relieved that I didn’t need to go to school today.

Splats of rain hit my bedroom window. All of a sudden, I heard a bang and a crash. Immediately, I was wet. When I opened my eyes, I saw styrofoam, rubbish, uprooted branches flew into my room. I thought Armageddon was coming. Bits of glass had flown onto my legs and I squealed loudly in pain. I looked like a hedgehog. My bed turned from white to brilliant scarlet. Cold wind blew on my face and I started to shiver. With hair all over my face, I felt really devastated and frightful.

I dialed 999 rapidly after I found my half-wrecked smartphone. Fortunately, I was sent to the hospital after two hours. The 2-hour wait was a torture as blood seeped onto my bed. I met my worried mom and she vowed not to leave me alone until I am old enough. My legs had been swollen and hurt seriously and I had to stay in the ICU for a week. Next time when a super typhoon hits, I’d better tape the windows or stay away from them.
Letter of Advice – The School Swap Journey

2E Twinkle Lai

Dear Tommy,

How have you been? I heard that you are having a School Swap journey in Seoul, and that you are really depressed and want to fly home. I understand that this School Swap journey is really challenging, so I will try my best to give you some advice on how to continue this journey.

Firstly, I want to advice you on how to face long hours of study. I think making the whole process more enjoyable, and getting good results in exams and tests should be the goals of studying. In order to reach these goals, I think jotting down notes and highlighting key words during classes are really important. This not only help you to be more concentrated in class, with the main points emphasized and simplified, it is also easier for you to understand the knowledge taught in class. To make studying enjoyable, I suggest listening to light music to release some of your stress. I listen to music while studying too because it really does calm me down, making the study process faster.

Secondly, when you really can’t memorize the things you need to study, I suggest drawing the key points out or creating funny stories about them to make them easier to remember. Since I always use this method, I can tell you that it always works for me. Although I have suggested a lot of ways to help you, I still think paying attention in class is really important. Try to stay awake in as many lessons as you can so that you won’t miss anything.

When you are studying really hard, I just want you to remember that there are people cheering for you, such as your classmates, your family and your friends. Remember, you are not the only one studying all those materials, the whole school is studying them too. You are not alone!

I know that school life in Seoul is hard but studying there for one week is not that long. You will be going home so soon that perhaps by that time you won’t want to leave. Therefore, make the most of this rare opportunity given to you. Good luck! Hope that you will be less depressed.

Best wishes,
Chris
Letter of Complaint –
Disappointing Services and Manner of Staff
2E Jack So

Dear Manager,

Re: Complaint about Disappointing Services and Manner of Staff

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with your product and the staff’s manner, both at the online store and the flagship store.

The first complaint concerns the late delivery of the product. I bought a SENPHONE 2E-1836 computer from your online store on 19 September. Your website guaranteed that the computer would be delivered in a week’s time. However, I did not receive it until 20 October and as a result of the delay in the delivery, I missed an important online conference at work.

The next complaint concerns the malfunction of your product. When I unboxed the computer, I discovered that the top right hand corner of the screen had a scratch mark and the colour display was not working properly. I believe it had been dropped on the ground. When I started using Microsoft Word 2016, a window popped up and said the software could not be run. As a result, I decided to use Wordpad to type my documents. However, the keyboard did not work either. I had tried a few times but none of the buttons on the keyboard responded. It was frustrating.

The third complaint concerns the 24-hour hotline. I dialled your hotline 20 times, but no customer service officers could be reached. I was put on hold and nobody picked up the call even after half an hour. I could not help but give up.

The fourth complaint regards the improper manner of the staff. I took the laptop computer to your outlet and asked for a replacement. Your staff in the shop simply refused rudely without letting me explain the whole situation and told me to get out of the shop. I felt very outrageous about the unfair treatment I have received from your frontline staff.

I expect to receive a full explanation regarding this matter. If I do not receive a satisfactory reply, I will lodge a complaint with the Consumer Council.

Yours faithfully,

Chris
An Inspiring Trip
2F Jayden Fung

Good morning, everyone. My name is Jayden Fung. I would like to talk about one memorable thing that happened during my Christmas Trip in 2016. My family decided to spend the winter in Thailand that year.

Have you heard of a place called Bangkok? Do you know if it is a city or a country? Let me introduce this prosperous and vibrant city to you all. Bangkok is the capital and one of the most populous cities in Thailand. It is very hot throughout the year, even in December. Traffic jams are also a serious problem, because it’s easy to own a motorcycle or a private car there as the price is low. That’s what keeps the roads busy.

I went to Bangkok with my parents in 2016 during Christmas. After landing, I sensed that something was wrong. In the airport, I found that all the local people were wearing black T-shirts. I saw more people wearing black T-shirts on the way to our hotel, some were even foreigners. Some of them were crying and most of them looked very upset. What had happened? Do you know? We met our local guide later on, who was also dressed in black. Was there a protest going on, trying to ask some government officials to step down like we did in Hong Kong? Out of curiosity, I asked our local guide what had happened.

He told us that their king had passed away a month ago and the whole country was still in mourning. They dressed in black out of respect for the king. Many people missed the king so much that they voluntarily did so and some foreigners followed. Do you know why the Thai people love their king so much? Our local guide told us that he had helped implement a lot of policies that benefited the poor, and Thailand had become much wealthier under his rule. Under his leadership, the country became one of the most popular holiday destinations in the world. Some local people even think that their deceased king was their God. I finally understood why they were so upset. The late king of Thailand has inspired me a lot. He taught me the importance of being a good leader, which is to work hard to earn the respect of his people. So, what can we, as HongKong-ers and our government, learn from him? Nowadays, there are lots of contradictions and disagreements in our society. We are desperately in need for a good leader that can unite us. In order to foster a more harmonious society, our leader has to govern for the best interest of Hong Kong people. He/She needs to also think about how to strengthen our businesses ties with other cities in China and in the world.

I would like to end my speech with a message for you all. Instead of thinking only of themselves, good leaders include others. Successful leaders understand that they should put ‘we’ before ‘I’, and ‘us’ before ‘me’. The people they lead are always at the forefront. I hope all of you here will become a successful leader and create a better future for Hong Kong.

Thank you.
I arrived at school at half past seven. I put down my stuff and got ready for another boring day. Everything was usual until I saw a note which was stuck on the classroom door. It told me to go to Mr Leung’s office during the first recess.

Mr Leung rarely talked to me so I found it a bit weird. However, when I arrived at his office, the door was open and nobody was inside. When I was about to leave, I saw a piece of paper lying on the floor all on its own. I picked it up and found the word ‘Confidential’ printed at the top of the paper.

I was caught in a dilemma. My inner angel and demon were fighting fiercely. I was struggling between taking a look at the document or leaving it at where it had been. At last, I gave in to my curiosity and read the document. My heart was racing while I was reading it. I was shocked by the content. I could hardly believe my eyes! Mr Leung was going to resign!

It’s impossible! Mr Leung was a good teacher. Although he rarely talked to us, I knew he regarded us as his children. He was not too old and he was performing well as a teacher at school. He was diligent and cared about his students very much. Why such a good teacher had to resign? Did anybody force him to do so? The bell went off and it interrupted my thought. Puzzled still, I quickly went back to my classroom to prepare for the next lesson.

When it was Mr Leung’s lesson, I found his wrinkles had deepened. There was a faint sense of sadness hidden in his usual grin. It was not easy to discover, but I had spotted it after reading the ‘Confidential’ document in his office. I couldn’t just sit there, pretending nothing had happened, so I told my best friends about the document at lunch. All of them were shocked, but they all believed in me. They told other people in our class, but they thought we were lying. We could do nothing.

Finally, it was Mr Leung’s lesson again in the last period. After the greetings, I stood up and shouted, “Why are you leaving us? Did someone force you to resign? Can we help you?” Some of my classmates were stunned by my bold questions. Others were confused until they saw Mr Leung’s facial expression. They knew it was true.

My classmates stood up one by one. When we were all on our feet, we felt our heart was on fire, scorching in pain. Some of us were upset. Others refused to believe it. Many were crying and every one of us was unwilling to let go of Mr Leung.

Allowing some time for the ‘news’ to sink in, Mr Leung opened his mouth. He explained that he had been sick for quite a while and needed to take a long break from work to recuperate. Although the illness was not fatal, he thought he could also take this opportunity to rest. It was a sad decision but it was also the right decision.

After learning the truth, we all fell silent. We were silenced by our sense of helplessness. We couldn’t restore Mr Leung’s health. We could only give him a lot of love and care as well as a memorable farewell party.

Mr Leung’s leaving was disappointing but he left us with many valuable lessons which will never be forgotten.
Do You Want to Try Drama?
3A Kristy Cheung

Dear Solomon,

It’s been a long time! How are you doing? Calvin said you’d changed your school again. Is he correct? By the way, I was really happy and surprised to have received your letter last week! Well, let me answer the questions that you asked.

Form Three is the last year for you to play hard and find more hobbies. Here are some of the activities that I think will be suitable for you. Do you still remember Mr Cheung saying you’re not confident enough? It’s a chance for you to change! You told me that your school was looking for actors in the school play. Why don’t you go and audition for it? Joining drama productions can boost your confidence and you can learn how to communicate with others well. Trust me, drama is really a fun activity. I’ve joined it before! Didn’t you say that you wanted to prove you’re brave enough to speak in front of many people? Nothing is difficult for a willing heart. Also, you’ll have to remember a lot of dialogues. It can enhance your memory. However, don’t be scared. It’s easy for you. Practice makes perfect. If you have enough rehearsals, it’s never a difficult thing. Remember, making new friends is very important. Therefore, be sociable! As I said I’ve joined a school play before, I’m still missing the whole cast of it. Although we’ve just known each other for a few months, our friendship can lasts forever. I hope you can feel the strength of our friendship too!

Secondly, I remember telling you that you’re not patient enough sometimes. I know you can improve on it, can’t you? Never say never! I’m not sure if you heard of rubber stamps before. Not many people are doing it, but it doesn’t mean it’s not good. Carving your own rubber stamp sounds great, right? Not only can the process improve your patience, you can save money from buying gifts for friends as you can just do it yourself. You don’t have to worry about having art lessons anymore because it can also cultivate your artistic sense. It sounds really professional, but I know you can do it! Believe in yourself. Carving rubber stamps can also develop your hand-eye coordination. It’s a good thing for you especially if you’re still playing computer games, right? I did it before too. Honestly, it’s quite a waste of time, so remember to manage your time well! Don’t put too much time into carving it. By the way, if you really don’t know how to carve rubber stamps, feel free to ask me, or just watch some videos on the Internet. There’re many useful videos. It may be a challenge for you, but you must accept all the challenges that come your way, mustn’t you?

I have to stop now. My mum is asking me to sleep. Look forward to seeing your letter, and your rubber stamp! Take care!

Love,
Kristy
The Troublesome Cheque
3A Issac Cheung

I opened the book to the folded pages and caught a flash of yellow – a cheque! What did a cheque have to do in the middle of my book, *Introduction to Finance*? Did someone leave it there? I was thinking to call mum when my brain finally recognised what’s on the cheque. Written in neat handwriting: three hundred million US dollars, to the bearer – no name on it! Thoughts of luxury were already coursing through me.

“Wait. That’s not ethical to take it!”

“It’s ethical to take it. There’s no name on the cheque. It belongs to whoever discovers it.”

The angel and demon in my mind were battling... At last, “Never mind. I would take it.” I said.

After a few days, I appeared at school a little differently. I got my hair done at the most expensive hairstylist’s, a new pair of Cartier glasses, a Rolex and many other items that you could name. My parents noticed my changes, but I simply made up different reasons to stop their suspicion.

“Mum, my best friend, Peter, is practising his hairdressing skills for the upcoming competition.”

“Dad, the old glasses were broken by David, the naughty boy. The Discipline Master asked him to buy me a new pair.”

“The Rolex? Oh, I got it from a lucky draw.”

One day, my chauffeur drove me to school. Yes, I hired a personal driver. When I got out of the Lamborghini, which just cost a penny, I looked at my classmates’ private cars disdainfully. Urrghhh, Mercedes Benz, BMW... Did people still use them? As I was going into the school building, the entire world looked at me, jaws dropped. They couldn’t believe that the poor boy who couldn’t pay for lunch last month had become so wealthy.

“Did he win the Mark Six last week?” Paul, the ignorant boy, questioned.

“No. nobody won for a few months,” said Mary. Thank heaven. She sounded more sensible.

“Maybe he inherited a handsome sum of money from somebody?”

“Oh Mary, you’re so smart. True. I got it from somebody. Somebody whom I don’t know”, I thought. All morning, people stared at me and treated me considerably better.

“Hey, Issac, do you want a drink?”

“Hey Issac, could you have lunch with me?”

“Yeah,” I replied, “I’ve reserved a VIP room for lunch at the restaurant of the 5-star hotel across the road. Feel free to come. The appetizer is foie gras on toast, main course is Wagyu beef sirloin,
dessert is... I forgot. Anyway, it’s something around $250. So make sure you have some money in your pocket!”

That shut him up. Felt good, man!

Soon, it’s recess. Vincent was queuing up at the tuck shop. I walked to him and handed him a $100-note. “Hey, Vince. Can you get me a bottle of orange juice and some siu mai? Keep the change.” I made the offer generously.

“Oh, sure! It’s my honour to help!” replied Vincent. He looked at me enviously as I walked away.

It’s lunchtime. I suddenly wanted to have Japanese cuisine, so I cancelled the booking. As for the deposit I paid for the table reservation before, so be it. Then a few classmates joined me. We also played video games together. Food came. Well, fair quality! But anyway, you shouldn’t expect Michelin quality in such a small restaurant. The bill was on me. It was only $500.

The luxurious life had continued for a few months until one day, when I was watching a film at home, the doorbell rang. Who could that be? Mum and dad should be at their workplace. Anyway, I opened the door only to find that a business-looking man in blue shirt was waiting outside. But there was something about the way he looked or stood that gave me a foreboding feeling. I mustered up all the courage I had and said, “Hello, who’re you looking for?”

He said in a cold flat tone, “Hello. This is the Hong Kong police. We are looking for Issac Cheung.”

I had a moment of shiver and thought that he did not come with good intention. “That is me.”

“The HK Police Force has found that you’ve used a cheque which was not entitled to you. Please follow us to the police station,” instructed the officer.

“That’s impossible. I’m such a good citizen. Did you come to the wrong address?” I tried to defend myself, but it was useless. I had to go to the police station.

I tried to contact some famous lawyer to represent me to defend the case with an attractive sum of reward, but none of them agreed to help because...I was truly wrong!

I ended up being sentenced to jail. Regretful as I felt, I shouldn’t have taken the money. Had I listened to the angel, stayed determined that it was not ethical and suppressed my greediness, I wouldn’t have had such an ending.

Now that I’m in jail, my future is bleak. No one will give me a chance. My friends are disappointed with me. What doesn’t belong to you never belongs to you. If I could travel back in time, I would definitely burn the cheque.
Something about the Moon
3A Justin Ho

The moon is always a mysterious place. Due to our curiosity, we have tried our best to invent new technologies in order to get closer, to know more about the moon. That’s why we got Neil Armstrong, the first astronaut who successfully landed on the moon in July 1969. Not many people know, that not only humans went to the moon before, even a monkey got there.

As many know, the moon is a satellite of the Earth and lots of tales from around the world are about the moon. For example, Chang E, the Chinese goddess of the moon who drank an elixir, flew to the moon and has lived there ever since. On the other hand, according to western culture, the sun is always trying to catch the moon, that’s why they never appear together. In ancient Greek mythology, the moon goddess is named Artemis.

From all the evidence above, we can see that people love the moon. Some people even see the moon as a role model in telling us how to be tender. There are also songs related to the moon, such as “Fly Me to the Moon” by Frank Sinatra and “Mr. Moonlight” by the Beatles. They are both famous and fantastic songs.

In conclusion, the moon is always a thing people look up to. We fancy it and I can’t wait to see the day when we can travel to the moon.
Surviving Child Abuse
3A Anson Lam

The book - *A Child Called “IT”* - is mainly talking about a child called Dave Pelzer. He was a survivor of child abuse. When Dave was a child, he was brutally beaten and starved by his mother. His mother was called Catherine Roerva. Catherine was an emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother. She played horrible games with his son. She treated him like a slave instead of a son. Dave’s bed was in the basement, he was forced by his mother to wear the same clothing each day. The clothes were torn and smelly, but Dave used his bravery and internal motivation to come out from the dark and make his own life.

My most favorite character is Dave. During those years, he not only went through psychological trauma but also physical abuse. His mother beat him and burnt him. However, he escaped from his mother, Catherine. The police recognized that Dave’s parents must be abusing him regularly. Dave had been experiencing those terrible things but he didn’t give up on himself. Besides, he felt that he was a stronger person after going through everything that he had endured and experienced. It is not an easy thing to get out from your shadow, and Dave was the one who can do it. That is why I admire him and he is my most favorite character. I want to learn from Dave Pelzer’s positive mind which enabled him to look forward but not backward. Be brave and stand out. Do not be timid.
A Life-Transforming Friendship
3A Risa Ma

My favourite character in this book is Mr. Brownlow, who was a friend of Oliver’s dead father, Edwin Leeford, in the past. The police misunderstood that Oliver had stolen Brownlow’s handkerchief. But Brownlow explained that he wasn’t the thief, he even adopted Oliver at last.

The reason why I like Mr. Brownlow is because he was kind and generous to Oliver, who was an orphan and was treated badly in his childhood. Mr. Brownlow also changed Oliver’s life, teaching him not to steal things again and also not to stay with the bad guys. Although everyone said that Oliver was a boy of bad habits, stealing things all the time, Mr. Brownlow still believed in Oliver that he was a boy of eccentricity and good humor, and was waiting for the day that Oliver would turn into a good child.

I really appreciate the attitude of Mr. Brownlow and how he treated others, and even on someone he knew nothing about. He believed that everyone wasn’t bad at all, they must have their good side. So, he claimed that Oliver would turn into a good person someday. He taught him the correct values and asked him to make kind friends. Also, he tried to find Monks, who was a half-brother to Oliver, to be kind to Oliver and explained the affair of his father with Oliver’s mother, Agnes, and asked Monks not to hate him.

But if I were Mr. Brownlow, I would not help to explain the relationship between Oliver’s parents to the brothers at first because I would be afraid that Monks would deepen his hatred towards Oliver. I would just try to assist them, such as trying to help them know more about each other, to let Monks eliminate the hatred and misunderstanding towards Oliver and his mother. After that, I may start to tell them the story of their parents. Also, I would teach Oliver how not to let people misunderstand him all the time, and to stay away from Fagin’s gang so that he wouldn’t be kidnapped and get hurt due to the failure to rob, and how not to be misunderstood by police officers again. Moreover, I would teach him to forgive and be kind to people, even though they had hurt him before.
A New-Death Experience

3A Wystan Tsin

The plane was shaking violently. The pilot was shouting while mumbling words from the PA system. The emergency exit lights were blinking intensely.

“Look,” someone pointed to the window emotionlessly.

I was gazing at the direction he pointed, as everyone else on the plane seemed to be looking outside of the window. The atmosphere was instantly filled with concern and anxiety, blending with screams and muffled cries.

“Brace, brace, brace!” instructed the flight attendants.

At that moment, I experienced true weightlessness. Then, I was sucked back to my chair vigorously with a jolt, as I was trying to grasp what was closest to me. The dangling oxygen mask was all I could grip. I held onto the mask with all my strength. The plane itself experienced another bump and I slipped, banging my head to the chair in front of me. Then, everything turned black.

Was that death?

Moments ago, I was shaking with excitement as I was boarding the plane, thinking that going to Thailand would be so much fun. I still remember the flight attendants smiled at me while I was boarding. Kids were laughing as adults put the luggage into the overhead compartment. The plane was full of joy with lots of blissful families. Sitting next to me was my brother. He, too, was excited.

“We’ve never been to Thailand before. I’m so thrilled,” I said.

“This trip’s gonna be great!” my brother said without realizing that this might actually be his last ride.

“I have a feeling that we’re gonna have some special experience!”

An abrupt jolt made me pause the film that I was watching, the plane moved furiously for a while and then stopped, returning to normal.

“Just slight turbulence,” I told my brother calmly.

As I was about to watch the film again, the pilot shouted on the radio, giving instructions. A distant explosion was heard. What was shining outside wasn’t sunlight but the engine. It was spinning vigorously as smoke and fire were pouring out.

I stared at it blankly as people were shouting. I was scared, engulfed in fear. Looking to the left, my brother was thrown out of his seat by the compressing airflow. An impact on the plane stopped my freefall momentarily and I hurt myself again.
Nothing followed except pain and trauma. All I could see was darkness. I experienced endless sensation as I was finally tossed out of the seat by the incoming wind and crashed into something. It was like falling through a bottomless pit and fear was all I could sense.

A sudden crash woke me up and I found myself lying on the floor on the aisle. All I could hear was groaning and loud screams underneath me. We had landed. The once lively atmosphere was filled with horror and dread. No one said anything, deafening silence resonated within the cabin. All of us were shivering with fear.

The emergence exit blasted open as medics rushed in. All the passengers were waiting to be taken care of. My brother was lying there unconscious. Looking at him, I couldn’t help crying.

Yes. He was right. This trip really gave us some special experience.
Dear Solomon,

It was such a pleasant surprise to receive a letter from you. We have not sent letters to one another for a long time. I am so glad that you still remember me. Oh! Back to the letter that you sent to me, you said that you have just moved to Form Three and wanted to start a new hobby of something that not many people are doing. You are asking the right person, I am very good at advising others. Let me advise you on two fun and special hobbies.

The first hobby is to become a bus spotter, a person who loves buses very much. I think you can try to be one. Usually, bus spotters will buy some bus models or make models by themselves. They also love to collect some books about different bus models. They have lots of activities. If you think it might be kind of boring to just stay at home to do such things, then you are wrong. A bus spotter also has outdoor activities. Bus spotters go out to take photos of buses and study the bus structure during photographing. Being a bus spotter can help you make new friends, you can meet new people when you go out. If you are really interested in it, I can introduce my friend Benson to you. He is a bus spotter and a big fan of buses. You can know more about buses through him. Although being a bus spotter is fun and won’t be boring, you still have something to pay attention to. From the news, some bus spotters did not care about safety on the road. They just wanted to take good photos so they run on the road to chase after buses. Some bus spotters even hurt others because they block a bus spotter’s camera, which I cannot agree with. Anyway, being a bus spotter is interesting and can help you make friends, but being careful of road safety is a must. I hope you like this hobby.

The second hobby is baking. This hobby might be easier than being a bus spotter. Baking can help you relax and you can enjoy the process happily. Baking includes lots of things such as birthday cakes, cupcakes and cookies. You can find the recipe you like from the Internet and make them by yourself. During the process, you can know what ingredients go into making a cake. Then you can try to eat them and think of how to make it better by adding different ingredients it. When you are good at it, you can have your own recipe or maybe write a book to sell. If you make a cake successfully, you can also give it to your parents or friends to taste it. You will find happiness from the people who tasted it and said it was great. However, you might fail in your first few attempts, feel disappointed and do not want to bake again. If you have this problem, you can find me or send a letter to me. I will help you if I can. Baking can make you and the people around you feel happy. I hope I can try the cake made by you very soon.

So, you will have to choose a hobby that you love between being a bus spotter and baking things. If you still have anything to ask, feel free to ask me. I hope you can write to me soon and tell me what you have chosen.

Best wishes,
Agnes
A Blessing in Disguise
3B Kim Cen

I was walking on the street and listening to music last Saturday. It was enjoyable. However, the music suddenly stopped, and then I realized that my phone had fallen out of my pocket. I was desperate at the moment and tried to find it. At last, I had to admit that I had lost my phone.

I’d been having bad days after losing my phone. No more Wechat or Instagram. That truly drove me crazy. I even imagined my phone was still in my pocket. But it wasn’t.

On Monday, things started to get unbelievable. I saw a ‘Lost and Found’ notice on the noticeboard by accident. I noticed it was about my phone. I was about to scream at that time. I was too excited to say anything. I found the name of the founder very familiar. But I just couldn’t remember who she exactly was. It was a name I had called for so many times. I quickly contacted the founder. Her name was Juliet. She was so kind and helpful. I found her voice very familiar and warm. We decided to meet on Monday night.

On Monday night, I was really joyful and looked forward to meeting Juliet. When Juliet appeared, I was totally shocked with astonishment. I couldn’t even say a word. It was Juliet, Juliet Ferrati, my best friend in primary school. Juliet was also surprised. Without any hesitation, we hugged each other. We nearly cried.

When I was in Grade 2, I transferred to a new school. At that time, I had no friends. Juliet was the only one who helped and cared about me. We soon became best friends. We promised to be best friends forever. Unfortunately, I had to move to another city. Therefore, I had to say goodbye to her.

After that, I missed Juliet so much. We often talked on the phone and shared new things at school. However, because of heavy school work, we had lost contact and had not talked for 10 years. I actually missed Juliet but I forgot her phone number and had no way to get in touch with her. It was a huge disappointment. Surprisingly, I lost my phone and Juliet found it, then we met again after 10 years.

Sometimes a loss might turn out to be something better. That’s luck and also a blessing in disguise.
Letter of Advice

3B Kim Cen

Dear Sam,

How’s everything? I’m terribly sorry to know that you are feeling unhappy these days. I understand that being in such situation is stressful. Let me give you some pieces of advice that may help solve your problem.

First, you should not give up practicing kungfu. It’s important to do something you really enjoy in life. There can’t be only studying in your teenage time. Your hobbies and interests also enrich your life and make it more meaningful. When I was in Grade 6, I was under great pressure because of the schoolwork. But I felt completely different when I started to play Rubik’s Cube. When you’re stressful, just try doing something you really enjoy, and that may do a great job in your life.

Secondly, you have to gain some balance between schoolwork and practicing kungfu. Kungfu is important for both your well-being and your schoolwork. You should do well at school first and then develop your interests. You can try to spend less time practicing kungfu and study harder to make sure you don’t fail in quizzes. If you scruple your time carefully, I am sure you’ll manage it.

Other than that, I think you can talk to your parents. You need to tell them that you’re able to do well in quizzes. You had a lot of rows with them just because they are really worried and cared about you. You should let them stop worrying. If it’s quite embarrassing to do so, you may try writing them a letter. Tell them how much you love kungfu and ask them to support your interest. You may also tell them your new schemes for studying which helps you to achieve good grades. I suggest you make a promise to them that practicing kungfu won’t influence your schoolwork. My parents used to worry about my study. We did have loads of arguments. I was really sad at that time. However, I wrote to them and told them that I was trying hard to study better. They were relieved and our relationship got better and better.

Relax, my dear friend. Remember, ‘While there’s a will, there’s a way.’ I’m sure your problem will finally be solved. Don’t give up if it doesn’t happen straight away. Do drop me a line. I’m really worried about you and wanted to keep us updated. I hope your problem will soon be solved. Good luck.

Cheers,

Kim
The Misfortune is a Blessing in Disguise
3B Jet Kan

It was the last day before the Christmas holiday. I was thrilled as I could play with my phone all the time. After school, my friends and I went into a fast food shop and they started to share their activities for holiday, but I didn’t have any plan. While we were leaving, I found that I had forgotten my phone! I immediately went back. Unluckily, I tried to find it but it was in vain. “What should I do in the holiday? I have lost my phone!” Although I kept telling myself to keep calm, I couldn’t. My smartphone was too important in my life!

While I was walking on the street and feeling puzzled, I saw a young girl putting up some posters. She noticed me and suddenly asked, “Hello, do you want to join our ‘singing group’?” That sounded really interesting and fun. After I had listened to her introduction of their ‘singing group’, I decided to join them.

At the group, there were lots of people: elders, teenagers, families, etc. Some group members told me that they were going to sing Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. As I did not have any plans for Christmas, I joined them and sang in Tsim Sha Tsui. I thought it was a really great experience! After we had finished the performance, we joined a ‘Cleaning Beach Competition’

That day, we went to the beach by bus and started the cleaning work. It was a really tiring job as the sun shone brightly and our faces all turned rosy. After having to pick rubbish for two hours, the competition finished and we won the prize! I was thrilled but tired, so I went back home and decided to sleep early at night. As I was brushing my teeth, I realized that since I lost my phone, I slept earlier every day! Also, I could sleep better and therefore I wouldn’t be tired in the morning!

On the last day of the holiday, while I was walking along the street, I met my old friend, Jackson.

“Oh! How have you been lately, Judy?”

“I have lost my phone, but I found that it’s not a very bad thing at all.”

“Why? Why do you think so?” he said in surprise, “Smartphones are really important!”

After I shared my experiences, he suddenly turned quiet and said, “I think I should do that too. I always play with my phone and cannot pay attention in class!”

Jackson decided to join our group so that he could “live without his phone”, just like me!

“Jackson, we are going to explore our city and our world. Don’t just play with your phone!” I said.

“Sure,” he replied.
Lost
3B Sylvia Kwok

My name is Judy and I have just gone to study at university for six months. I have a good friend named Jackson. We have known each other since we were in middle school, which means we have a relationship for at least six years. How time flies! In order to celebrate our entrance to college, our parents bought us the latest smartphones. From then on, we have been going everywhere with our smartphones in our hands. We couldn’t even live without them. In the first term at university, I could hardly meet Jackson on campus. However, every time I met him, he became weaker and weaker. When the first term was over, I heard that Jackson had gotten a bunch of Cs on the grade list and almost failed the exam. I was so worried about him but I didn’t have any idea.

During the holiday, I went to a lot of places of interest and had a great time alone. Unluckily, I lost my smartphone on my way back. I was so sad and grumpy at first because I had had it for only six months. However, I still needed to face the truth. I began to do part-time jobs in the holiday. After some days, I had totally changed my mind. I decided to go to the library to read and prepare for lessons before classes. In order not to feel lonely, I also went out to do exercise for at least an hour every day. I could focus on everything I did, and I had never felt so happy and relaxed before. At the end of the holiday, I withdrew my salary from the bank, and bought an electronic book. While I was walking on the street, I felt so confident and energetic.

When I met Jackson yesterday, he told me that he had quarreled with his family and felt very upset the whole week. Then, I told him my experience about leaving my smartphone, and advised him to cherish his time when he was with his family instead of playing on his smartphone all the time. I would like him to know that communication is the key to create a harmonious family. He took my word and felt very touched. He said he would reduce his time playing on his smartphone and focus on studying in the future.

We should take time to show kindness to those we hold most dear, and just extend a helping hand to others through the year. Let’s set aside some quiet time to share it with people who actually need us.
Letter of Advice – Leaders of Tomorrow Programme
3C Vincent Wong

Dear Evan,

How are you? I know that you were selected to join the AAJ’s youth leadership programme — Leaders of Tomorrow. Congratulations! However, it seems that your mother is worried about your safety, and is not positive with you attending the programme. Maybe I can give you some advice to confront this situation.

First, you can try to explain to your mother that your dream is to become a professional mountain climber. Having a dream, a goal in life is important, it is not trivial. It affects our whole life. I think your mum would agree that you would not be joyfully living without a dream. Although your mother doesn’t seem to support you, she is just worrying about your safety. Whose mother would want her son to be in an accident? No one! You can keep your communication with your mother open and listen to her advice. Tell her that the programme is really safe after all. You can show her examples from their website like “safety ropes will be provided”. If your mum still strongly opposes your plan and doesn’t sponsor any travel expenses, you can ask our principal for advice. He is now introducing a programme supporting students in our school to have their dreams come true. To get the travelling expenses, you can write him a proposal on what you can learn from the programme, for example, certain skills that can help you to be a professional mountain climber. I am sure he will support you and sponsor the expenses.

Also, I heard that you’re preparing for your university entrance exam and starting to get worried. As your dream is to become a professional mountain climber, you can choose some subjects related to it, like Sports Sciences, offered by many universities in Hong Kong. I’m sure that you’re nervous about how to study in order to prepare well for the exam and setbacks. I strongly advise you to put away your mobile phone while you are studying since it can strongly affect your study with constant incoming of messages.

Secondly, you should make yourself comfortable while studying since this can help you concentrate more. Thirdly, and I think it is the most important piece of advice, is to have enough time for rest and entertainment. Doctors claim that not having enough sleep would damage your memory, which makes your study ineffective. Don’t ignore the importance of entertainment, since it can help you feel relaxed and can make it easier for memorization.

In conclusion, talk to your mother and articulate to her that your dream is to be a professional mountain climber, and that you really want to join the programme. If that fails, contact our principal for support and sponsorship. Also, work hard for your university entrance exam and have enough entertainment. Work hard! Play hard! Hope you will get good results and can study what interests you in university. Good luck!

Yours,
Chris
Catastrophe
3C Jocelyn Wu

That day was a nightmare, a catastrophe. My home was filled with water, and the tapping sound of the wind — I still remembered vividly.

“Typhoon signal No. 10 will be hoisted tomorrow. Mangkhut is the strongest typhoon in Hong Kong history. Its intensity is...”

We sat in front of the television and listened to the reporter while we were having dinner.

“It seems that the impact of this typhoon will be very serious,” my mother said.

“Rest assured. Everything will be fine. It’s been okay before, this time also. We will just stick adhesive tape on the windows and put sandbags in front of the door,” my father said.

“That’s all? Should we take any further precautions?” I asked.

“No need. Don’t be scared,” he said, but the nightmare began.

“Father! Father!” I yelled.

“What happened? It’s only nine o’clock!” he said.

“Didn’t you say everything will be fine last night? Look! Why have all the trees fallen down? The whole village looks in ruin! I haven’t seen this before!” I pointed towards the window and said.

When my father came forward, the wind gradually gained momentum and tapped the window strongly. Sundries were fluttering outside in the gale. Suddenly, I heard a vigorous crashing sound close to the balcony. In an instant, a pot hit the window and glass fragments dispersed on the floor. The wind entered through the crevasse and blew away all our belongings and drenched our furniture and appliances.

“Oh my...” I whispered. At that time, the sandbags were also blown away and the rain flooded into our house. Although my mother used towels to block the door gap, it didn’t work. Soon, the water rose to my ankle. The sundries outside were constantly hitting the door and the door eventually fell. Water kept flooding in and the water level surged, even my waist was soaked in water. Furniture was floating and a wooden cabinet bumped into my left leg. My head was almost immersed in water. I tried to swim but I couldn’t as my leg got hurt.

“Daughter, are you okay?” my father and mother yelled.

However, I saw them struggling in the water as well. I was out of breath.

“Can anyone help us?” I said in my mind.

“Are you guys okay?” I heard a voice.
Suddenly I was pulled out of the water. Oh, it’s the firemen!

The firemen came to save us. I took a sigh of relief.

At last, we were sent to the hospital and received treatment. Fortunately, we survived this disaster! I also learnt a lesson after this experience. We shouldn’t belittle the impact of a typhoon and should be vigilant and take all possible precautions to protect our home. One experience like this is enough!
A Day without My Mobile Phone
3D Siu Cheuk Wing

I found out that I’d lost my mobile phone yesterday morning before I went to school. The thought of not being able to check my Instagram until I got a new phone bothered me very much. I was in a bad mood, day-dreaming in every lesson until noon.

My friend Amy went out for lunch with me. After we took a seat in a café, Amy started using her mobile phone and didn’t even look at me. I felt anxious and a little angry with her. The people with phones around me seemed to be mocking me for not having a phone, and Amy didn’t even talk to me in this case. While I was playing with my fingers and trying to make myself busy, I looked out of the window and saw the flowers growing in the garden. I have looked at them before but they didn’t seem to be so colorful and refreshing at that time.

When I walked back to school with Amy who was still looking at her mobile phone, I suddenly realized that we seldom talked to each other even though we are best friends. On top of that, I might have missed something beautiful or meaningful because of using my mobile phone.

After school, I hopped onto the bus I usually take to go home. I looked out of the window and found that the view of the jostling pedestrians and heavy traffic in this hectic city was actually quite funny, because nearly everyone was looking at their mobile phones. The little screen on the flat little box may be poisoning our minds and trapping our souls in a small world.

Though I am still not used to it, I have already asked my mother to buy me a new phone which could only text and make phone calls. Furthermore, I’m also planning to go hiking next week. I have replaced the Google map with a paper one. I also asked my friends to give me their phones to keep in order to prevent them from using their phones. I am afraid that they would miss the beautiful view of the mountain. I really want them to know that there are lots of interesting things in the world. There are a lot more things to observe than their mobile phones. I hope all of them will discover the true beauty of the world.
Dear Edith,

How have you been? I’m very sorry to hear that you’re suffering from insomnia. You don’t know what is causing it and you have no idea how to solve this problem. But don’t worry, pal. Let me give you some advice that may help solve your problems.

Firstly, you are a student and the main reason that will cause insomnia in students should be stress. I know that you don’t want to lose any time for your revision. This is so wrong, because you are tired after studying for a long time. If you take a rest before going to bed, you will feel relaxed and won’t have insomnia anymore. Besides that, if you are really worried about your tests and exams, you should make a timetable for revision. If you do so, you will be relaxed due to the planning of revision timetable, and won’t miss any part of the exam.

Secondly, your diet is another reason that caused insomnia. I think you always drink too much coffee or tea when you are doing revision before bedtime. It’s the obvious reason to make you stay awake. Coffee and tea contain caffeine that will give you energy and reduce fatigue. The best way to relax yourself is to sleep. Remember, not drinking caffeine can solve the problem of insomnia.

Thirdly, don’t play electronic gadgets before bedtime. I know you also like playing computer games in the holiday before bedtime. You should stop doing it. This is because you are excited when you are playing the games and this excitement will continue through bedtime, so you may find it hard to fall asleep because of it. You should play it in the morning or afternoon and don’t play it one hour before bedtime. Besides that, blue light, which is emitted from the electronic gadgets will also stimulate the eyes and cause insomnia, so don’t play them before bedtime.

Fourthly, you are lacking exercise. I know that you don’t like to, but it is a way to solve the problem. When you are doing exercise, your body releases something which can make you feel tired and you will find it easy to sleep due to tiredness. I suggest you do it in the morning or afternoon, the same as playing computer games. You will feel excited when you are exercising, so don’t do it one hour before bedtime.

Relax, my friend. Remember, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way”. I hope your problem will soon be solved. Do write me back in one or two months if you need more information. I will be there for you any time.

Best wishes,

Loren
A Day without My Phone
3E Eunice Lau

In the 21st century, a mobile phone is a must. I used to check my social media whenever and wherever I was. I thought I couldn’t live without my phone. However, yesterday something happened that changed my mind.

After having class for a whole day, I was exhausted and barely capable of showering, so I collapsed on the sofa. I used all my energy to put my hand into my school bag to search for my phone. “It should have been in my school bag,” I told myself. I even turned the apartment upside down but I couldn’t find it. “Calm down. Calm down. I might have left my phone on the bus.” But after asking the staff, I still couldn’t find it. My gaze went to the ground. I felt a million years old, almost wishing I could somehow turn myself into a big senseless rock. I regarded my phone as my ‘spiritual food’. I was sure I could not live without my phone. That night, I would describe it as a suffering. It was plain and dull. I really could not adapt to this life. I felt time went back to the 70s’. That was the first time I hoped time could pass faster.

The feeling carried through to the next day. I was tired of doing nothing at home so I decided to go into nature with my friend. Beforehand, we had a big breakfast to ensure that we had enough energy to enjoy nature. For breakfast I had a piping hot bowl of soup and mashed potato, which was soft, like pillowy clouds that tasted like heaven. It was served with a piece of toast. The toast had been delightfully heated and turned slightly brown over the heat source; crispy and golden, just perfect for some creamy peanut butter and some ripened sliced bananas. I took a bite and it was like a symphony in my mouth. I felt blissful at that moment. Although it was the same breakfast, it was far more tastier than before. Maybe it was because I didn’t take any photos before having breakfast and didn’t use my phone while eating so I could use my heart to enjoy the food.

As soon as I arrived at the country park, it started to rain. Under my instinctive reaction, I ran to a pavilion nearby to shelter from the rain. Without my phone I had nothing to do, so I stared at the sky. Tinkling sound came to our ears as the first pearls of rain dropped onto the leaves. The sound was like the glassy champagne flutes clinking. The noise on the roof sounded like phut-phut-phut. The raindrops hit the ground and turned into many mini glass crowns, also gathering on the roof, until they thought it was time to start their adventure, they jumped off the roof. A curtain of rain passed by. It was such a beautiful scene.

The rain was about to stop and I noticed that beside me was an old woman. The old woman looked tender so I talked to her. She told me lots of stories, from her childhood to her teenage years. “When I was 16 years old, I climbed to the top of a mountain. Up there, I found a treasure which was gold in colour. It’s a pity that I am too old for hiking now, or I would like to go with you.”

Mary and I were excited. Recklessly, we rushed to the top of the mountain. However, we didn’t find any treasure, not even a single penny. But we chose to believe the old woman so we searched again. Fifteen minutes later, the treasure appeared. The golden treasure was the sunset. A sunset of brilliant colours and patterns played off the few clouds that had waited in the wings to become central actors in this unique presentation. It was such a magnificent show presented by nature.

That was the best day I had ever had. After today I realized that something like mobile phones, which we thought were necessities in the past, are just accessories. I thought a mobile phone could access information from all over the world. Nevertheless, unlike talking to people, we can learn from their experiences that have literally happened to them before at a personal level. Therefore, if we have time, I prefer to enjoy nature or talk to others instead of staying at home using my mobile phone.
Letter of Advice
3E Eunice Lau

Dear Sam,

It has been a long time since we’ve last met. How are you? I am really honored that you chose to write to me with questions about your school and family life. It sounds that you are facing a lot of frustration but be calm as you are not alone. Let me give you some suggestions that may help you ease your life.

First of all, you should practice good time management. This is because time is limited. However, there are many things that we want and need to do. Learning to use time effectively helps us to fulfill our responsibilities so that we will have spare time to do things we like such as kungfu. You can stick pieces of memo paper on your desk to note down what you need to do on that particular day. By doing so, you won’t waste any of your time. Also, you should concentrate. I understand that it is very hard for a modern person not to use their phone while doing homework or other things. To solve this problem, I would suggest you put your phone away from your line of sight. Then you won’t keep checking your phone. Let me tell you my own experience. In the past, I used to be like you too. I was addicted to my mobile phone. I had lots of afterschool activities and I also knew I had numberless homework. However, the first thing for me to do afterschool was to surf the Internet. One day, when I realized how serious the problem was, I started using a timetable. And it worked. I managed to do all my stuff in time. I even got plenty of time to explore new things.

In the letter, you also mentioned that you don’t know if you should keep practicing kungfu or not. My answer is surely a ‘yes’. Never give up an interest that you love with your heart. I know that you have been practicing kungfu for twelve years. In this twelve years, countless time and sweat has been paid. Believe in yourself. A world-famous NBA basketball star, Michael Jordan, once said, ‘If you quit once, it becomes a habit. Never quit.’ You are a talented kungfu practitioner and you love this sport. If your mom doesn’t let you learn it. Use your actions to prove that you are able to strike a balance between kungfu and your studies. It isn’t worth anything if you give up at this moment. Please continue practicing kungfu, pal.

Moreover, you hope to improve your relationship with your parents. I think you should spend more time with your parents. Every day during or after dinner, it is good for a family to sit together and have a chat. Listen to how another person is feeling and respond to what you think they were saying and how they are feeling. This is the key point to building strong family and relationships. There is one year till HKDSE and I could feel how your mom worries about your future. She wants you to work hard promptly. I’m sure that you don’t want your parents to worry about you, do you? Prove to your parents that you could manage it.

My advice might not be very useful, but I hope I could help you. Relax, my friend, remember, ‘Where there’s a will, there’s a way.’ Do drop me a line. I’m really worried about you and want to be kept updated. I hope your problems will soon be solved. Fingers crossed.

Best wishes,
Chris
My Favourite Place  
3E Mason Ma

My friends often ask me where my favourite place is. Frankly speaking, I did not have a place I favour the most, but now, perhaps there is one to present to you: Vernon and Giverny, located at northeast of Paris.

You may not have heard about this idyllic town before, or you may have heard of it if you know that Monet, a French painter, had lived there. There are lush plains under the bright azure sky, houses sparsely scattered along the Seine, which meanders through the miniature town. Apparently, no skyscrapers are erected in the region, which creates a clear blue sky articulated by mild breeze. Perhaps that is the reason why Monet chose this place for his lifelong settlement and for his artistic manifestation of its beauty.

Moreover, the picturesque views from every scope are all breathtaking, where our avian friends chirp and twitter, while colorful water lilies blossom and floral blankets shadow the mountains. Can you envision the picture and see how wonderful it is when you wake up every morning, listening to the symphony of nature and enjoying your java by the stunning views of the Seine?

Just a 50-minute train journey from Central Paris, Vernon and Giverny are easily reached. While flocks of tourists come here for the predominant Monet’s Manor, I recommend you to spend a little time strolling in the small scenic town. You will somehow discover Monet’s inspirations that motivated him to create his masterpieces and phenomenal artworks.

The heart of Vernon and Giverny, indisputably, is my favourite place.
Letter of Advice
3E Audrey Wang

Dear Sam,

I’m so sorry to know that you’re suffering from a bad situation with your school grades and the relationship between you and your parents. School can be very stressful, so it’s natural to feel overwhelmed at times.

I know that you really like kungfu. Actually, extra-curricular activities are an excellent way of broadening your horizons so you definitely shouldn’t give up practising. Don’t worry, let me give you some suggestions that may help you solve this problem.

I suggest you improve your relationship between your parents first. You need to spend more time talking with them. You should ask them for suggestions but not to argue with them. Also, you need to tell them that you are really interested in kungfu and will continue practising it. The more they know you, the more they will understand. That’s why the communication between you and your parents is very important. I think they will respect your choice and support you to continue with the things you love to do.

Moreover, I think you have to pay more attention to studies as it’s very important for you. In fact, your grades affect your parents’ attitude towards you. If you get bad grades, your parents will become mad and demand you give up practising kungfu to focus more on study. It’s a normal reaction. Every parents will do that because they care about your grades and worry about you. So, you really need to work harder on your studies and get better grades. If your grades have improved, your parents will be happy and they won’t punish you or ask you to give up practising kungfu. It is a great thing, isn’t it? Besides, day by day, the relationship between you and your parents will improve.

My suggestion is that you keep practising kungfu because it’s important for you. I can see that you really love it. However, you should also work harder on your studies and allocate more time on them. In addition, you should try to find some time to let other people into your life. You need to spend more time with your parents so that you can have a good relationship with them. You have to find balance in your life. If you schedule your time carefully and are willing to challenge yourself in new ways, you will achieve. Don’t give up if it doesn’t happen right away! Do write back if you need more help!

Yours,
Audrey
How I Like Globalization

3F Carson Leung

Definition
‘Globalization’ refers to the process of commercial enterprises on an international scale, that develop global influence and integrate with the world’s companies and consumers.

How I have benefited from globalization
Globalization has given us the convenience of an advanced transportation system. For example, the metro system was invented in Britain, and thanks to that, Hong Kong as a previous colony of Britain, had introduced underground railways decades ago, making Hong Kong one of the most developed metropolises in the world. Now we can access any partsof the city within a short period of time.

Thanks to globalization, customers around the world can have more choices when they are looking for any specific products of interest. In any supermarket in Hong Kong, we can find imported goods from around the globe, be it Australia-imported Sunkist oranges, Germany-originated sausages or Japan-grown persimmons. Even the most indigenous products have become ubiquitous and available on the Internet year round.

What I am concerned about globalization
On the flip side, however, how the multinational companies treat their labour is contentious. As we all know, resources and materials for manufactured goods are mostly from third-world developing countries, such as Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh and so on. However, reports have revealed that sweat shops in these third-world countries force child labour to work long hours with meagre pay. They are paid little money but have to work over twelve hours a day. Moreover, globalization has triggered conflicts between local industries and foreign companies. When the multinational companies from developed countries set foot in developing countries, their influences are immesurable and make the local industries suffocate because the locals are less competitive. The locals may lose their working opportunities and sources of income leading to indignant sentiment in society.
My Favourite Place
3F Yip Wing Yu

Seated in Canada’s political centre for a hundred and fifty years, the parliament of Canada is my all-time favourite place. It is a must-go attraction among many tourists and even locals to discover the fascinating history behind Canada, the meticulous architecture of the vast building, and the picturesque scenery of Canada’s capital. Let me take you on a brief tour.

Outside Parliament, you will be stunned by the Parliament’s majestic appearance. At the very front of the block, you can see a red flame burning in the centre. It’s the Centennial flame, surrounded by bronze shields of provinces and territories of Canada. Natural gas feeds the flames so it never goes out. This is the best symbol for Canadians: their passion in their soul never vanishes. The block is in the Gothic Revival design: the pointy top of the clock tower, the pointy arches and stained glass make it seem like a massive medieval castle. There are also various species of flowers surrounding the building, attractive and charming like pixies. As you are gleefully taking shots of beauty, remember to listen carefully to the sound of chimes from the clock tower: it rings a different tune every hour.

After a long and dull security check, the excitement starts initially. Your first destination—the Hall of Honors is in front of you. Walk down the hall where the names and achievements of the most important and successful politicians in Canadian history are. Enjoy learning history along your walk. You should be aware of the fact that the hall stretches through the centre of the building and links all the elements of the block. Don’t be too overwhelmed by the plenty of information. You might get lost!

In a few moments, you will arrive at your next stop—the House of Commons. Here is where national issues are examined, and new laws are introduced, debated and passed over these years. Try to imagine yourself watching one of the meetings: representatives from over the country packed the house, arguing and voting for the laws, or sometimes hearing the word “objection”! It feels stimulating and thrilling just by imagining that scene.

If you are an architecture lover, you will be amazed by the design and construction here. There are many wonderful stone carvings around the block, such as the Grotesque and the Salamander boss. Moreover, you can also enjoy looking through the stories behind every colourful and shimmering stained glass, each tells a unique story. Finally, you should take notice of the structure of the bells inside the clock tower while taking the escalator to the observation floor. There are a total of 53 bells in many sizes.

Arriving at the observation floor comes the most exhilarating part of the journey. From the top of the Parliament, you can admire the spectacular view of the city of Ottawa. Apart from the hustle and bustle of the city, you can find other famous landmarks like Byward Market, Rideau Canal and even a part of the Quebec province. Don’t miss out the high mountains and long rivers from the far lands. These elements build a very awesome masterpiece. Furthermore, there is more historical information about Canada therefore it’s also great to check it out. There’s no need to worry if you’re fearful of heights. After having a glance of the scenic view of the city, your shrieks and shudders from the beginning will be gone. In fact, you’ll feel much more relieved by admiring the magnificent landscape.
In a nutshell, I’ll say that the Parliament of Canada is just like a treasure chest: you’ll never know what’s inside until you open it. It is surely full of surprises. Some may think that it’s a boring place to visit at first sight, but they will soon find interest in its historical elements and exquisite architecture, impressed by Ottawa’s splendid scape. I highly recommend Canada’s first-time visitors to spend more time exploring the Parliament since it will give you an unforgettable impression of how remarkable Canada is!
A Soldier’s Diary
3F Yip Wing Yu

6 June 1944

I was in the middle of a light doze when the deafening siren rang that ruined my pleasant dream of returning home triumphantly. My mates and I were irritated by this unwelcomed notification after a fatiguing night, but we still dressed up, grabbed our gear and left the barracks.

We formed a neat squad to receive instructions, then the lieutenant general announced, “Attention to all soldiers, we had discussed with our other western Allies and had decided to carry out Operation Overload now, which is to invade Normandy, one of the locations the German Nazis conquered. All paratroopers need to get in our C47 aircrafts right after this announcement and land on the headquarters in Carentan. Is that clear?”

“Yes sir!” we replied with assurance, as we swiftly boarded the aircrafts. At the crack of dawn, aircrafts started to take off. As we arrived above Carentan, the pilot ordered us to jump off the aircraft one by one. The wind was so forceful that I landed a few miles away from the destination. Instead, I found myself in the middle of nowhere apart from my mates.

I felt so petrified when I was being surrounded by trees because I felt like the Nazis might be hidden in the shrub, and planning an ambush. Startled, I tried to find a place to hide like a refuge. All of a sudden, my eyes caught sight of a widen hut, approximately a mile from me. Therefore, I sprinted like a cheetah since I knew I might be safe temporarily.

I knocked on the door with anxiety and a woman opened the door with her husband. She wasn’t gorgeous, but seemed kindhearted. I asked, “I’m an American soldier. Are you willing to hide me for a while?” She nodded and I climbed into the cupboard with caution and slammed the door.

A couple of minutes later, six Nazis storm troopers entered in. Fear wrapped around me while they were searching the hut thoroughly. I prayed that they couldn’t find me, but my luck ran out and they dragged me out of the cupboard. Abruptly, there was a loud bang and the Nazis executed the husband with a rifle. His corpse was terrifying. Then the Nazis locked their captive, which was me in the shed.

Fortunately, I noticed a hole in the roof of the shed that I could escape from. I quickly left and darted towards the wood but I could hear the roars of the Nazis after me. The situation was hopeless but I didn’t give up. I made up my mind and rocketed back to the hut valiantly. This time, I knocked on the door and the woman opened the door rapidly. She was tear-eyed; her face was pale as snow. She stared at me. However, she ordered me to hide in the cupboard once again reckless. Unaccountably, the storm troopers hadn’t come back to the house once. I came out of the cupboard with care to search for any patrolling Nazis. I thanked the woman and went back to the headquarters just as supper was starting.

This is the most unforgettable experience up to now. I was very grateful that I wasn’t detonated into pieces, but I really appreciate the help of that family, especially the woman. She didn’t show cowardice when I returned and was willing to sacrifice her life to protect me from danger, even after the tragic death of her husband. If only everyone in the world had this magnanimity of heart, maybe war wouldn’t exist...
A Secret about My Talented Friend
3F Kenson Yeung

“Bruce! It’s time to sleep now!” shouted his mom. I was invited by Bruce, my classmate, to sleep over at his house.

“Bruce, why are you staring at the wall?” I asked.

“Nothing special, I was just thinking.”

I switched off the light and rolled over. I wondered why Bruce would invite me to stay overnight. Bruce was, to my knowledge, an introvert. He seldom talked to people at school. I met him in a music class and we became friends. No matter what was happening around him, he would just take a glance and walk away without saying a word. He didn’t participate in any school activities. The teachers were also alarmed by his quiet character and asked him whether he had been bullied. However, Bruce simply denied in a cool manner and left. When meeting him for the first time, I thought he was a strange guy. Why doesn’t a boy play games or sports? Despite his quirky character, we became intimate friends.

Suddenly, I woke up with a start. I heard some music near my bed. I was puzzled! Why was there someone using the computer in the middle of the night? Why wasn’t Bruce in bed? I looked closer and saw Bruce working on the computer with his headphones on, but he had forgotten to plug in his headphones so music was literally coming out from his computer! What was he doing? Meanwhile, I was burning with curiosity. I saw some scripts and notes on the computer screen and thus finally realized that he was composing some songs.

At the moment, I heard a familiar melody. It’s the song I usually listen to on the Internet. He was arranging new instruments into his song. I was really amazed by what Bruce was doing. His pieces have been uploaded and gone viral on the Internet. Bruce is very talented in composing songs. His songs are all very melodious and soothing. His songs are composed under pseudonyms so no one can recognize him. I thought it was a secret of his since he has been staying anonymous and composing at midnight. I also understood that everyone’s talent is unique. Like Bruce, although he has seldom communicated with people or done well at school, he is good at music.

After that night, I told Bruce what I had seen. He was glad to hear my compliment on his music and asked me to keep his little secret. No matter what will happen, I shall not disclose his secret to others. I also offered to help him improve his interpersonal skills since helping each other is the obligation of being friends after all.
The Dancer Who Regarded Dancing As Glory
4A Ivy Lam

Good morning everyone. Today, I am going to share about a historical person whom I admire. But first, let me ask you, who are the ones you admire most? A musician? An artist? Or a president of a country? Now, I’m going to tell you, the historical person I admire is Rudolf Nureyev.

Rudolf Nureyev, a male ballerina, was born on a Trans-Siberian train near Irkutsk, Siberia, Soviet Union on 17 March 1938. When he was a child, his mother took him to a ballet performance of the Song of the Cranes, and at that moment, he fell in love with dancing. He was encouraged to dance in Bashkir folk performances and his talent was soon noticed by teachers who later encouraged him to Saint Petersburg. On the tour stop in Moscow, he auditioned for the Bolshoi Ballet Company and was accepted. However, this kid was a perfectionist. Thinking that the Mariinsky Ballet School was the best, he left his local touring company and bought a ticket to Saint Petersburg.

Owing to the disruption by World War II, Nureyev was unable to enroll in a major ballet school. When he was 15, he was finally accepted by the Voganora Academy of Russian Ballet of Saint Petersburg, which was the school he felt was the best option. Later, he was defected from the Soviet Union to the West. He was the first defection of a Soviet artist during the Cold War and it created an international sensation.

Nureyev went on dancing with The Royal Ballet in London and later served as director of the Paris Opera Ballet. He produced his own interpretation of numerous classical works, including Giselle and La Bayadère. At age 54, Nureyev was admitted to hospital until his death from complications arising from AIDS. His funeral was held in the Paris Garnier Opera House. Since he was an avid collector of beautiful, wonderful carpets and antique textile, his tomb features a mosaic of an oriental carpet. As his coffin was lowered into the ground, music from the last act of Giselle was played and his ballet shoes were cast into the grave along with white lilies.

You may ask why I admire him or how he has inspired me. Let me tell you my story. When I was 3, I started dancing ballet, but actually hated dancing at that time because of the intense training. My grandfather knew I hated it, so he showed me a video of a dancer’s performance. The one who was performing in the show was Nureyev. Due to his amazing ability to defy gravity with his magnificent leaps, his powerful turns and also his ability of intense characterization, I thought he was the most gifted male dancer in ballet’s history at that moment. In my heart, a voice rang – I must become a great dancer like him. His dance forced me to keep moving forward and persisting in achieving my dream.

Once upon a time, my grandfather was one of the dancers in the crowd in a performance which Nureyev was the main character. My grandfather told me that Nureyev was an unusual man in all respect: instinctive, intelligent, and extraordinarily disciplined. He did not have much patience with rules and hierarchical order. He also had a volatile temper at times. He was apt to throw tantrums in public when frustrated. My grandfather said he was told off by Nureyev before, which later my grandfather cried and ran away. Nevertheless, celebrities who socialized with him, such as Gore Vidal, Jackie Kennedy Onasis and Andy Warhol, kept old friendships with him in and out of the ballet world for decades. He was considered to be a loyal and generous friend.
When I was 13, I danced in his school at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet in Saint Petersburg, where a rehearsal room was named in his honor. This is the most unforgettable experience of my life, and I told myself I must become the best dancer after dancing in this room.

“If you love dancing, you should regard dancing as a kind of glory, but not to show off.” This is what Nureyev said, and I want to share this sentence with you. I hope you will keep it in your heart and think - what is your honor? Thank you.
Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Today, it is not only a speech that I have brought, but also a short story. First, I’m going to share the story with you.

It was a scorching and smelting noon in summer, when a young boy passed through the square in front of the Paris Court. He saw a young girl bound to a stake by an executioner who gripped a red-hot iron applying to her flesh. In extreme pain the girl cried out a grievous shout. The boy was Victor Hugo. He is the historical character that I’m going to share with you today.

Victor Hugo, all of whose works got the figure of that suffering woman, and that agonized cry was claimed to be “the cry on Hugo’s heart that will never be tarnished”. I would not describe Hugo simply as a famous French poet, playwright, novelist and ideologist. I would say in Hugo’s 83 years of personal life, he had only done three things - watching, thinking and writing. Of course, falling in love for two times was what he also had done with his two beautiful girlfriends. But it is how he has inspired and changed people’s opinions that brought him fame, not by making girlfriends.

Hugo died on 22nd May, 1885. After his death, the French people held a state funeral for him. In the long procession, there were soldiers from the Red Cross Society, victims of earthquakes and floods, and members of the Paris Commune. I believe that all of them had been given hope and found respect in Hugo’s works. Think, if you were a poor man who could not fill up your empty stomach every day, and you had to put all your power into doing hard work; then, you opened a book and found surprisingly that the writer was criticizing the noblemen who bullied you. Now I would wonder whether the writer is an angel. He was so nice, wasn’t he?

In all of Hugo’s works, sincere sympathy to the poor and praises to virtues were shown in the form of both romantic and realistic words. So which characteristic about him do I admire the most? I would say that he always described a behavior from the perspective of humanity and the world. Remember Hugo was the first one who set up the lessons for Global Perspective – just a joke. We can see a lot of respect was given to the art works that belong to humanity in Hugo’s works. For example, the destruction of the magnificent and resplendent structure, Notre Dame de Paris, was criticized to the utmost extent. I mean dumb construction engineers who got the dumb ideas of rebuilding Notre Dame de Paris were criticized. Hugo said they were donkeys. Another example, the conduct that France and England had done to the old Summer Palace which was known in all languages through piracy. Do you remember, Chinese? It was criticized mercilessly in a letter to Capitaine Butler. For a funny fact, Butler had been hoping to get praised by Hugo for what he had done. Butler, not Hitler. But, whatever. Another example, in Les Miserable, Hugo pointed out the darkness and sickness of the community, and the sincere sympathy to the destiny of lower-class people.

From his novels, I do not only pay attention to the architectural art, but also have learnt a principle that makes me more sober-- not only artists and ideologists, but normal people should be clear whatever the situation he is in. What is this statement saying? If life plays tricks on you, don’t just lie down and become a salty fish. Try to embark on a new journey from general situations when we deal with questions, and watch the dark corners carefully. Do not be blinded by things that primary school teachers told you. Besides this, the poetic text and the glorious scene he described in novels made me yearn for a better future, too.

Think about brave things belong to all humans, and think about suffering lives as well. That’s actually what Hugo told me from his works. He has been inspiring me, and inspiring every corner of this world.
Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am Chris Wong from Pui Ching Middle School. It is my honour to stand here and share with the History Society about the historical person I admire. The person I admire most is Steve Paul Jobs. I am sure everyone here knows who he is. He is best known as the pioneer of the microcomputer revolution which took place in the 1970s and 1980s. He was also the co-founder of the famous Apple Inc. Thanks to Jobs, we can all enjoy his innovative designs and products. Without him, our world would have definitely become so much different. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to pay my respect to him.

First of all, let me tell you Jobs' background. You may be surprised to find that Jobs was an adopted child. During his childhood in California, Jobs developed a passion for electronics and mechanics because of his foster father, Paul Jobs. Steve understood clearly what he liked and found school boring. Therefore, like some of you and I, at school, he was a mischievous student. No one played with him. Some schoolmates even thought he was an odd person. This 'naughty' and 'alienated' student didn't complete college. That was not because he couldn't, but he just didn't want his parents to spend money on his education. Strange belief, wasn't it?

Then, you may want to know how he became such a successful computer pioneer. As I mentioned, Jobs showed strong interests in electronics and gadgetry. He met Steve Wozniak, a young engineer, during his high school years. They met again later in 1975 and invented a small computer which became the prototype of Apple I. In 1976, the computer company - Apple - was founded. Although later, Jobs was forced to leave Apple because of an egregious mistake he made, he did not give up his interests in this area. Instead, he learnt from the mistakes and persevered in his inventions. Thanks to his endeavour, he worked in Apple again in the 1990s. Since then, Jobs has designed many incredible life-changing products, such as Macintosh, iMac, iPod and so on, you name it.

I admire Steve Jobs so much because of his attitude. His success did not come easily. It took years of hard work, determination and perseverance to make Apple a famous brand. His achievements were beyond comparison. He has changed the way we live. One of his famous quotes is 'Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of other’s opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most importantly, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.' Yes, had it not been for such belief, I am sure Jobs would not have become such a giant influencer who has changed many lives. His words have become my motto. Whenever I experience obstacles in realising my dream, this quote has become the best emotional support and panacea to me not give up.

I hope Jobs’ story can give you some inspiration too. Boys and girls. Whenever you come across difficulty in life, don’t give up. Think of Jobs’ story and I am sure you will become great people too.

Thank you
From Unknown Strangers to Just Like Family Members –
Dai Pai Dong: A second home for us all
4A Lois Yu

Dai Pai Dong, which means “restaurant with a big license plate”, is a traditional licensed street stall with a small seating area, selling cooked food at low prices. It was first operated in Hong Kong since the late 19th century. After World War II ended, the government started to issue licenses to the families of diseased and injured civil servants. Dai Pai Dongs reached their peak in the 1950s and even earned the nickname “poor people’s nightclub”. But due to noise and traffic complaints led by their popularity, the government stopped issuing new licenses and prohibited the transfer of existing ones in 1956. As a result, the amount of Dai Pai Dongs dropped severely from the maximum of 3000 to only 25 Dai Pai Dongs left in Hong Kong: 11 in Sham Shui Po, 10 in Central, 3 in Wan Chai and 1 in Tai O. We know that Dai Pai Dongs are disappearing but why is it worth preserving? As Dai Pai Dongs are places for each and every one, people from different social statuses, distinct countries and races can gather by their visit. There is a saying “safe as houses”, and Dai Pai Dongs are just the best place to protect dissimilar individuals which results in everyone assembling together. Yet the government is leaving most of the Dai Pai Dongs to emerge and perish on their own, exploiting the "comfortable niche" of the public. For me, the values of Dai Pai Dongs represent a house, with foundations of compassion, pillars of cultural heritage and a rooftop with a cradle of memory.

For the compassion foundation, firstly, the origin of Dai Pai Dong is already an act of compassion, as allowing relatives of the killed and disabled civil servants to open small restaurants on the street and make a living is a demonstration of the spirit of humanity. It is a social welfare policy just for them and giving them a stable job and a thriving and prosperous business. Also, the strong bonding between owners and customers is on the basis of compassion. In the past, since Dai Pai Dongs offered a quick, cheap meal, they were the perfect choice for the grassroots. With compassion, the owners of Dai Pai Dongs considered the needs of the poor by satisfying their survival needs with good service. Besides eating, Dai Pai Dongs are also a places for working class people to meet and talk, to socialize. The owners, who have just experienced the death of their relatives and the poor were sympathetic towards the situations of each other’s lives. Company is the best remedy for getting through phases of misery. This is where their friendships started blooming, they are the places which motivate people to communicate with each other. After nearly 70 years, none of their relationships has changed much. Whenever the owners are available from their work, even it’s just for a few minutes, they are willing to interact with their customers and care about their lives. The customers are also concerned about the owners' tiredness and their time for rest. The process of their communication is sincere and mutual. As time passes by, frequent customers will become a lot closer with the owners. With more and more subjects of conversation, they will gradually be molded into good friends. The convenient environment of Dai Pai Dongs and their mass-oriented conditions attracts grassroots, office workers, tourists and even owners of other restaurants to visit, waxing its cultural diversity. The wide range of cultures fosters customers to know more about each other, and more connection between them will be made. Although some of the customers come alone, with the root of compassion, they would initiatively attempt to sit together with a group of strangers. With a table of people from different backgrounds, they would talk about almost everything like their family and life experiences and encourage one another. This neighborhood spirit is worth preserving and is one of the specialties of Dai Pai Dongs.
For the cultural heritage pillars, to run Dai Pai Dongs are more than a business. They are a family inheritance life force and are famous for their perpetuation spirit. The business is the family’s economic pillar and helps solve family's financial problems. It is operated by the family as a team, everyone has their own unique positions, just like the Dai Pai Dong, Mui Kee Cookfood Stall, where six brothers and sisters do shopping, cutting, cooking, serving, and washing separately. This Dai Pai Dong had been their father’s business and they started helping the family business since Primary 2 to 3. They started off helping by washing dishes and doing unskilled work. "Although the work was tiring, I feel happy doing them," one of the owners said. These offsprings are now happy to be responsible for the continuation of their father’s business. The special culture is also a key of Dai Pai Dongs. Dai Pai Dongs have one of the most extraordinary cooking methods in the world: "1 chef 2 woks". The chefs of Dai Pai Dongs would hold a wok each in both hands and cook both of them in a particular sequence. Not only is the cooking method rare, their cooking utensils are some odd ones too. They cook with handmade stoves, for example kerosene stoves transformed from rice cookers are the legacy of the Mui Kee Cookfood Stall owners' father. In addition, the way of taking orders in Dai Pai Dongs stands out from other kinds of restaurants and diners. The waiters who take orders usually are not prescribed uniforms, and mostly only wear a sweat suit with a towel put over it. He/She scribbles your order on a piece of paper, writing abbreviations of the selected food like "C O T", which stands for cold lemon tea. These symbols are used to shorten the time of ordering, maintaining their efficiency. On top of that, Dai Pai Dongs are a free seating eatery. Customers can choose their own seats and can change seats easily, they can talk and laugh loudly without complaints, sitting with whatever position they want, for example with a leg put up on the chair and stay there as long as they like etc. On the contrary, customers are mandatorily assigned to their seats according to their quantity, forced to turn down their volume of talking and get bizarre glances when speaking a bit loud, require to sit properly and will be turned back instantly and ruthlessly after finishing your meal and so on, in other types of eatery such as Cha Chaan Tengs, Western restaurants, Japanese, Thailand, Taiwanese and Korean cuisines. Besides the difference in behavior of eating, the installation of the eatery is also totally not the same. The location of the kitchens of Dai Pai Dongs are set by its owners where the majority would have them right beside the customers and are opened for everyone to see and enjoy the process of their food being cooked. They would like to provide the finest service for the customers and this designs are conducive for them to have social contact with customers with more convenience as they care about them and do not only want money from them. Their customers’ trust, feelings, and friendship are crucial to them. Whereas for other restaurants, the kitchens are separated from customers with a huge wall blocking the sight of customers to see what is going inside, just like their hearts, which are closed to customers, not containing any genuineness when associating with them. They could have vague impressions of some frequent customers, but that’s all. Occasionally supplying some small advantages to them, nothing more. The relationships between owners and staff of other restaurants and their customers are merely for business. This shows that Dai Pai Dongs are full of freedom, favours and warm hospitality.

For the rooftop of a cradle of memory, Dai Pai Dong is a collective memory of many Hong Kong people. Dai Pai Dong has been a good place to socialize for 70 years. People visit Dai Pai Dongs for the cheap prices of around 30 to 40 dollars, unchanging taste of food and the elasticity of ordering. People see it as a place with an enjoyable culture, able to have a good chat with other customers, able to go
through the astounding techniques of cooking and able to appreciate tasty food. People see it as a place with a free and unconstrained culture, placed in a free setting. People can do whatever they want, nearly no overcautious self-control has to be maintained. People see it as a place with a warmhearted culture, customers’ relationships with the owners are so true, relationships between customers are thorough and firm and the neighborhood spirit of Dai Pai Dongs make everyone that are involved practically family members. People adore it for being the perfect location for long-term gatherings, a venue where you can always have someone to chat with even you did not have any appointments, a site that you can feel reassured to let the owner of the Dai Pai Dong have custody of something that you temporarily want to lay down. They are places made up of wood, partially only covered by canvas, normally green in colour. Such image of Dai Pai Dong rings the bell of Hong Kong people of something like a giant tin box, which was the former design. They are places where almost every Hong Kong people has become used to sitting in the hard foldable chairs around a hard foldable table. They are places where almost every Hong Kong citizen has learned the story of the handmade stoves by heart, where almost every Hong Kong people has gradually stopped protesting the absence of air conditioners. Mui Kee Cookfood Stall, Sing Heung Yuen, Chan Kun Kee, Yue Hing, Siu Choi Wong and lots more, have permeated into Hong Kong people’s lives. They have become a second home for the people of the city, and now turning into a collective memory of everybody’s.

Dai Pai Dongs are no skeptically a vital piece of Hong Kong’s culture. However, the Hong Kong government is watching them fade away. With the wait-and-see attitude, they just let our warmhearted street life disappear with folded arms. Take the 11 Dai Pai Dongs in Sham Shui Po as an example. Due to a considerable amount of noise and traffic complaints, they are not allowed to be passed to the next generation from now on, strangling their opportunity to bequeath the heritage to their descendants. Whereas the 10 in Central get to be benefited from an assistance scheme to upgrade the stalls and allowed for family inheritance. This manifests the government’s bias towards the Dai Pai Dongs in Central since they are the commerce center of Hong Kong yet Sham Shui Po is one of the poorest districts in Hong Kong, thus depriving the chance for Dai Pai Dongs in Sham Shui Po to uphold their ancestors’ belief. In conclusion, Dai Pai Dongs are a disappearing street life in Hong Kong. The culture and livelihoods created by them are irreplaceable and indispensable. Hope everyone can continue to project their foundation of compassion, protect the culture heritage pillars and preserve their cradle of memory rooftop. Save Dai Pai Dongs, these mirrors shining upon Hong Kong.
Let’s Discuss the Proper Duration of Summer Holidays
48 Chanisse Chow

When I mention “summer holiday”, what do you immediately have associations with? Is it chilling with friends or exploring the place that you’ve never been to before?

Taking a break is one of the reasons and purposes of having summer holidays, but more importantly, the main purpose is to encourage students to prepare ourselves for the subsequent school year and do some revision for what we have learnt so far. However, most students think that summer holidays are just a period of time for relaxation, one month and a half for them to create more memorable and pleasant times with their friends and schoolmates. Therefore, back to our main topic of today. Is it really essential for summer holidays to last for one and a half months? Or should it be shortened so to extend teaching time?

As a secondary school student, I speculate that we all agree to kids and teenagers needing a break, but one and a half months is just too long. Long vacation makes students lose a huge amount of what they’ve learnt during the previous school year and get totally out of school routine as they usually get out of the habit of reading, studying and ruminating as well. Continuous learning and studying is extremely pivotal because students need to constantly refresh their memories by going over their work again. By doing so, it can certainly improve the effectiveness of our studying in the next school year. Besides, if the learning gap is too long, it’ll become more difficult for students to acquire new knowledge in the next academic year since they may become demotivated, feel bored and find it meaningless.

On the other hand, some secondary school students are too young to stay at home unattended. It’s challenging for parents to find caretakers who can stay for such a long time as the summer holiday is too long. It can be really dangerous keeping children alone at home through the whole summer. Parents have the legal responsibility of taking care of their children and keeping their children safe at home, it’s hard for them to always make sure of their children’s safety and focus at work at the same time during the long period of vacations. Besides, for those students who don’t receive enough support at home, it’s a huge disadvantage for them as they have no one to rely on during the break. If the holiday is short, they can turn to their teachers and schoolmates at school. I believe that none of us will want to see our classmates suffer on their own.

Rather, school holidays should be more evenly spread in the year to allow students to take occasional breaks. Having more breaks throughout the year gives students the time to catch up on sleep and relax from the stressful school life from time to time. Especially in Asian countries, students nowadays spend at least 8 hours on studies. Students in Hong Kong, including myself, even need to stay up past midnight to finishing homework because of many extra-curricular activities. Therefore, we always suffer excessive fatigue and become lethargic during lessons at school. I truly believe that holiday spreading throughout the year would give us better chances to catch up on sleep and better chances to take breaks.

It’s palpable that the period of summer holiday should be shortened to 4 weeks instead of lasting for one and a half months. Let’s all confess that students have a bigger advantage when the vacation is shortened, and that gives our students a brighter, more fruitful and fabulous summer holiday.
Albert Einstein
4B Audrey Lo

Good morning teachers and fellow schoolmates. I am Chris Wong from the History Club. When you hear about the famous and influential ‘\( e=mc^2 \)’, who comes to your mind? I am sure that all of you will think of the most well-known scientist of the 20th Century—Albert Einstein, won’t you? It’s my honour to stand here today and share with you my admiration for him.

First, let me tell you his history. Albert Einstein was born on 14th March in 1879 in the German Empire. He lived with his parents and moved to Munich when he was one year old. Unlike most of the people with great achievements, Einstein was not very good at learning. He could not even speak properly until he was four years old. However, not being good at language did not mean he was an incapable person. Einstein excelled in Maths and Physics at a very young age. Like some of you here, his ability to do Maths was much higher than his peers. He taught himself Algebra and had the passion for Physics. After his graduation from ETH Zurich in 1900, he worked at a patent office. He spent his spare time studying Physics and started doing research. In 1905, he published the Annus Mirabilis papers. In 1922, he was awarded the 1921 Nobel Prize for Physics for his contribution to theoretical physics, and especially for his discovery of the law of the photoelectric effect. The 18th April 1995 was probably the saddest day to all physicists and Einstein’s followers because he passed away.

I admire Einstein for a number of reasons. His humility is what I appreciate most. Once Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was the 32nd President of the United States, gave him an invaluable offer to work in the United States, he declined it, which means that he gave up a promising future. When he received the Nobel Prize, he did not dress himself in an extravagant suit. Einstein liked to keep things simple and he had always been modest about his success. When he was under the spotlight, being praised by others for his contribution in Physics, he humbly showed his attributes to other great scientists like Isaac Newton. Einstein once said, ‘A calm and humble life will bring more happiness than the purist of success and the constant restlessness that comes with it.’ In my opinion, humility is the calibre that we need in this day and age. This is because, with success comes pride. Once we are too arrogant about ourselves, we will fall easily. Einstein has demonstrated to me how to be noble.

Einstein is also a persevering person. He said, ‘It’s not that I’m so smart. It’s just what I stay with problems longer.’ It was not easy for Albert Einstein to receive the Nobel Prize. ‘Rome was not built in one day.’ He overcame lots of difficulties and struggles. Einstein was a slow learner. His teachers saw him as a misfit and would never succeed! But he still worked very hard and exemplified his perseverance. He was a hardworking person to earn his doctorate degree. Believe it or not, it took him so many years to reach his goal as a physicist. Finally, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics.

In Hong Kong, the DSE takers have to work hard in order to get satisfactory results and be admitted to university. Both you and I need perseverance because we definitely will fall one way or the other. Let’s learn from Einstein. Never give up, stay stronger in difficulties, and we will realise our dreams one day.

Albert Einstein was an influential person and his discovery impressed the world. His personality was also worth learning. It may be difficult to become an influential person, but ‘Impossible means I’m possible’, I believe everyone can be successful. Thank you for listening to my speech!
The Greatest Egyptian

4B Alvin Shum

Hello there, today I’m going to tell you the story of the great man I admire, and the name of this great man is – Ramesses II - also known as Ramesses the Great or Ozymandias. Ramesses II was born in 1279 B.C., the 19th dynasty of the ancient Egypt. He’s believed to have taken the throne at the young age of 25 and then reigned for an impressive 66 years. After his older brother had passed away, when Ramesses was still a child, his father soon named him his successor. Due to that, Ramesses was brought up in the royal court of Egypt and was trained to be a leader. He was trained in the martial arts and various types of military tactics, and by his mid-teens he was seen as a participant of his father’s military campaign. He was then named the Prince of Egypt, and at the age of fifteen, he was married to his two main wives.

However, what makes Ramesses II so special and so great wasn’t because he inherited a tremendous empire, nor was it because he had a long and fruitful reign. What made him special was his courage, strategy and his influence on the world even centuries after his death. Some might say that Ramesses II was one of the greatest military leaders of all time, and the famous Battle of Kadesh was perhaps the best example for this claim. Not long after he was proclaimed Pharaoh, the young king found himself at war with his neighboring superpower. The Hittite empire declared war with the Egyptian Empire in order to show dominance over the area which we would now call the Middle East. To protect Egypt’s sphere of influence, Ramesses soon decided to lead the Egyptian army on his own and face the Hittites at the front. Due to faulty information, Ramesses was once trapped and outnumbered two to one. However, not only did the Pharaoh chose not to surrender, he also miraculously managed to escape from the enemy’s trap and led the Egyptian army reinforcements to defeat the Hittites. His victory was of course greatly celebrated, but the wise move of the Pharaoh came after his victory. It was then that Ramesses decided to sign the first ever international peace treaty with the Hittite Empire which would lead to a peaceful and beneficial co-existence of the two empires. This would allow Ramesses to invest more resources to secure his empire’s boarders in other corners. It was because of Ramesses’s resourcefulness and courage, he led battles on his own for the next two decades and reestablished Egypt’s position of superpower. Looking back at history, most emperors and kings were cowards who hid in their palaces when war came. However, not only did Ramesses serve in his army since he was a boy, he also charged at his enemies even when he was King of Egypt. And that is one of the most admirable qualities I find in Ramesses the Great, which was his willingness to shed blood and sweat on the battlefield.

Another excellent example of Ramesses’s exceptional leadership was the way he eliminated Egypt’s weaknesses. When their country was in crisis, most leaders blamed foreign countries. Before the Great War, the French blamed the Germans; before World War Two, the Germans blamed the Jews, so on and so forth. Ramesses II, however, chose a very different strategy. Instead of blaming others, he taught his people that what was wrong was the religious revolution that happened a few decades before his reign. He then reformed Egypt’s religion, thus restoring one of Egypt’s fundamental elements to harmony. That allowed Ramesses II to properly control Egypt’s resources and secure the empire’s position in the world. This strategy is still extremely useful in today’s world. Too many people are blaming others for their own faults and not checking problems within themselves. When I first discovered Ramesses II’s history, I couldn’t help but question myself, what have I been doing wrong? Apparently, there was plenty. Since then I continued to discover my faults and try my best to correct them. That is one lesson I’ve learnt that I won’t forget.
Nevertheless, even after all this, how has Ramesses the Great influenced the world even centuries after his death? First of all, his greatest legacy were arguably the great cities and temples he built. The Ramesseum and the Temples of Abu Simbel still stand proudly today symbolizing Ramesses II’s an architectural genius. Speaking of architecture, Ramesses II was renowned for the temples he built for his beloved wife – Nefertari - his first Great Royal Wife. It was said that Ramesses II’s love for her was so great he couldn’t refuse constructing a temple for her beside his own colossal statue at Abu Simbel. He was then known as one of the most celebrated figures in romantic literature, such as Percy Shelly’s Ozymandias.

To say Ramesses was only ‘great’ is an understatement, because to me, Ramesses II helped shape my perspective of the world. His uncompromising courage that was shown on the battlefront taught me that even in the most relentless environment, such as being outnumbered and trapped, I should still think creatively and counter my opponents. The willingness to fight doesn’t mean the unwillingness to make peace with your enemies. The peace treaty signed by Ramesses II symbolized the opportunity and benefits one can acquire with the willingness to let go of feuds and vendettas. After learning this important lesson, I find myself less hostile to people around me. More importantly, Ramesses II’s strategies for domestic and foreign issues were worth learning as well; by adopting his sense of discipline and responsibility I can achieve my goals much easier. Finally, I understand that leaving behind a legacy for the world is as important. Ramesses II literally represented the legendary Egyptian architecture and left behind a romantic literature that is still being celebrated today. After all, if one is to create something great, what point would it be to have no one remembering it? This is the most important lesson I’ve learnt from this great man, and these are also the reasons why I admire this person. Thank You.
Citizen Kane –
The Man Who Cannot Be Easily Summarized
4B Alvin Shum

Rosebud - the simple yet mysterious word Charles Foster Kane said on his death bed - which at the end of the film is revealed to be the trade name of the sled on which the eight-year-old Kane was playing on the day that he was taken from his home in Colorado.

Kane’s business manager, Mr. Bernstein, tells us never to underestimate the importance of tiny moments, and one particular tiny moment for Charles Foster Kane – Rosebud, is what made this film. To me, this is a metaphor for two things about Charles Kane, his innocence and greatness. You may ask, how? How does this relate to these two aspects of this man? As I have mentioned, Rosebud is the trade name of the sled Charles used to play with when he's a child, before he was taken from his home and raised by the bank's money. This sled may very likely represent the innocence and happiness of his childhood to Charles Kane, the years when he didn’t have to deal with the harsh and cruel world, and when the world was simple. Hence, there were only two times Kane said that word - when his second wife, Susan, left him, and when he was about to die.

Those two heartbreaking experiences probably finally defeated the ego of an arrogant man, forcing him to surrender to the world. All his life, Kane has been pretty much unbeatable, and unchallengeable, fighting and defeating one enemy and another. He has always been loved by the people around him, being called a hero, until he lost the campaign for Governor of New York over a scandal of a love affair with Susan Alexander. He eventually married after his disgraceful defeat, showing a tough front to the world, and very likely finding comfort. That “comfort” has, since then, acted as his way to find love, no matter if it was his way to attempt to love someone or to have someone to love him back.

As mentioned by so many in the film, all Kane ever wanted was to be loved. And when that comfort left him in his older days, he was finally tired of fighting and surrendered, thus remembering his innocence and happy childhood - Rosebud. Decades later, when Kane faced an enemy which no man, including himself, could beat - death, he acknowledged his defeat because he was exhausted after years of fighting. His exhaustion went beyond physicality, tiring his very soul. His only desire at that moment was to experience the innocence he had experienced so very long ago - Rosebud. This is why that became the last word he said on earth.

But what about the greatness of this man? What does Rosebud have to do with it? It all makes sense when I remember what Jerry Thompson, the reporter, said “Maybe Rosebud was something he couldn’t get, or something he lost. Anyway, it wouldn’t have explained anything... I don’t think any word can explain a man’s life. No, I guess Rosebud is just a ... piece in a jigsaw puzzle ... a missing piece.” Obviously, Mr. Thompson was right, the Rosebud was indeed something he had lost, and it was his innocence. Moreover, he was closer to the picture than he could ever imagine, Rosebud definitely cannot explain the entire life of Charles Kane. Kane did many things in his life, good things and bad things. He fought for the poor and downtrodden, he hurt the people who valued him and loved him. He fought for freedom as well as power. His intention behind his actions could have been heroic as well as villainous, but no single word can describe this man. He's far too complicated or great. Rosebud represented the greatness of this man, because it has proven that Kane's too great to be concluded with one word. Even in real life, there are many great men sharing the same situations with Kane. Take the legendary Steve Jobs as an example, his contribution to technological development was undeniable, his inventions had
changed the world. But from another perspective, he may not be so noble, as he denied the paternity of his daughter, Lisa, for years. As a result, Jobs’ daughter and her mother ended up living on welfare. To Jobs's credit, however, he eventually made the right choice by paying for child support as he should. Ultimately, you still cannot conclude Jobs’ with a single word, because he's far more than that, just like Charles Kane in the film.

To me, this single word might be one of the greatest words ever spoken in cinema history as it holds incredible depth and complexity. But who knows, perhaps just like what the film is trying to tell us, it doesn't matter. I guess this great film cannot be easily summarized, just as a great man like Kane cannot be easily summarized.
Bismarck – The Man Who Made History
48 Amy Tuo

Good morning everyone. Thank you for inviting me to share my views with you here. Today, I am going to share with you the historical person I admire.

Ladies and gentlemen, if I ask you the role of Germany in the previous world wars, you may consider that country as an evil manipulator who started the wars for their own benefits. However, have you ever heard of the person who kept Europe in peace was a German? He is the main character today, Otto Von Bismarck, the Minister President of Prussia and Germany. It is amusing that he has a peculiar and iconic moustache, which looked much better than Hitler’s brush moustache, though not as famous as Hitler’s.

Bismarck is not only well-known for his appearance, but his diplomacy of realpolitik and powerful rules, which brought him a nickname, “The Iron Chancellor”. Unifying Germany with himself as the Imperial Chancellor, while retaining control of Prussia at the same time in 1871, Bismarck devoted himself exclusively and successfully to maintaining peace between the powers. He skillfully used the balance of power and multilateral diplomacy to preserve Germany’s position in Europe. Here are some examples you may have seen from history books, such as him creating the Alliance system by linking the Central Powers, Three Emperors’ League, Triple Alliance and Reinsurance Treaty, all these are the products of Bismarck’s adroit diplomacy skills. Moreover, he needed to deal with a very complex interlocking series of conferences, negotiations and alliances. His foreign policies has managed to rapidly boost Germany’s rapid economic growth.

Apart from the external policy, Bismarck had done a lot of domestic policies, like creating the first welfare state in the modern world, with the goal of gaining working class support. “The main thing is to make history, not to write it.” Bismarck said. I believe that the achievement of a person is due to their ambitions and the goals they set. Bismarck dreamed big and wanted to be a main officer in the government so he started his political career when he was 32 and could finally be the minister when he was nearly 50. The path that he had taken was complicated and exhausting. Nevertheless, he was strong-willed and had insisted joining different elections which led him to his success consequently. If we seek our goals, and try to persist in striving for the target, we may probably succeed and make our own history as well.

Before the success, all of us have to face setbacks. The crucial ability is to struggle against and overcome adversity. Bismarck was despairied by higher authorities when he first started his political career, even when he got to be the minister. The failure of the first and second Alliance politics destroyed the relationship between Germany and Russia, but Bismarck learnt from his mistakes and started another Alliance with Italy and Austria-Hungary. Well, he actually didn’t learn from experience, as he once said, “Fools say that they learn from experience. I prefer to profit by others’ experience.” It reminds me to notice others’ experience and use them to improve ourselves. Hence, we can become stronger and make our own history. Sometimes, we may need to face failure after success. Bismarck was dismissed by King William II but did not give up. He kept his loyalty towards his own country. Integrity is an important quality for one who wants to make history.
Last but not least, Bismarck’s diplomatic skills can inspire us for our sociability and diffuse skills in our daily life. The way to keep a good relationship with your friends and relatives is as important as how a country maintains a friendly relationship with another. Few people know that the bad relationship between Austria-Hungary and Russia caused the Three Emperors’ League to break. Bismarck tried to preserve and reconcile the relationships with both Austria-Hungary and Russia. Just like in life, sometimes we have to deal with problems of our friends. If your best friends argue with each other, whom will you support? It is hard to tackle these situations. However, if you want to make history, you should have the ability to handle every small argument and problem in your social life.

In conclusion, I think there are lots of good qualities that we can learn from Bismarck. Also, if you want to make history, why don’t you start to learn to be more strong-willed, more ambitious, more social and most importantly, set yourself a goal!

That’s all for my sharing today. Thank you for listening.
True Happiness in the Deep Sea
4B Zirah Yue

Deep, deep in the sea laid two lantern fish, Christiano and Paul. They were weeping because they didn’t have any friends. It’s not hard to know the reason, they were narrow-minded, unfriendly and parsimonious. Moreover, they were mercenary fish and did all good things solely for their own benefits. Everyone disliked them because of their upsetting behaviour.

Meanwhile, a group of sea creatures, including James the giant lantern fish, some tropical fishes, Messi the seahorse, and Terry the sea turtle, swam passed the two sorrowful lantern fish. They talked and laughed, and the environment was full of joy. Also, each of them was holding some cans and bottles. They were participants of a volunteer program called ‘Collect trash, make the best home!’. They helped themselves and others to collect waste produced by humans. Although it was not an easy job, they really enjoyed and didn’t grumble at all, especially Hazard the Octopus, he was very satisfied because he helped many friends with his eight hands!

The crowd was discussing their experiences today, when James the Lantern fish stopped suddenly. He noticed the two crying fish. For one second he hesitated, but then spoke in a cheerful tone. “Nice to meet you guys, Chris and Paul. Well... we are doing some volunteer work, would you like to join us? It was full of fun!” The crowd cheered and agreed, but Paul interrupted and said slowly, “Volunteering? No, no. No money.” Christiano nodded too. “Don’t you want our home to be better?” Hazard the Octopus asked the two annoyed fish. “How much money can I get from a better home?” Christiano replied callously.

Seeing the irreconcilable value difference, the animals swam away hopelessly. Yet, very soon they started chatting gleefully about how they could help the community again. There was a big contrast between the crowd and the two helpless fish. Days passed, and Christiano and Paul still lay there, hoping there would be some benefits.

After ten years of earning and crying but doing nothing, the two lantern fish, Christiano and Paul, died because of over sadness. It was a pity that they didn’t realise what true happiness was through their whole lives. There was a chance given to them, but it slipped away from their hands and never returned.

It was said that happiness is not something already made, it comes from your own actions. The two lantern fish didn’t know this, and they only believed true happiness came from endlessly accumulating money. Unlike James and the crowd, they didn’t know true happiness comes from your heart, your friends and family, and also your good deeds and care for people around you.
Why Do Teenagers Want to be YouTubers?

4C Toby Chong

Good morning, everyone. Today, I’m going to talk about the reasons why teenagers want to be YouTubers. People once said, “Creativity is intelligence having fun.” YouTuber is one of the most popular careers, which requires a creative mindset. Recently, Travel Film First Choice conducted some research which claimed that 34% of children would like to be a YouTube personality. I will explain the reasons behind the phenomenon in 3F’s, ‘Fame’, ‘Finance’ and ‘Free time’.

First of all, ‘Fame’. Who doesn’t want a career that brings both fame and wealth? YouTubers get to share their creative videos to the world. YouTubers can get a million followers on YouTube and also social media like Instagram and Twitter. They can also collaborate with celebrities or other famous YouTubers. Moreover, some of the audience will start to idolize them and set up a fan club for them. I believe everyone enjoys the adoration and appreciation from others. That’s why the ‘Fame’ is the magic spell that draws them to becoming YouTubers.

‘Finance’ is another reason why teenagers want to become YouTubers. YouTubers can get a lot of sponsors for their videos. Furthermore, they can include ads to their videos to earn more money. Nowadays, some of the YouTubers also produce their own songs and merchandise or even hold a concert and fans meeting, which allows them to gain a huge amount of profit. Who doesn’t like to earn a lot of money in a work environment swarmed with an army of fans?

Last but not least, who doesn’t admire a career without a boss and a company without rules? YouTubers follow their own rules. They get to arrange their timetable for themselves. Shooting a video usually doesn’t take a long time. Therefore, they can have plenty of time to do whatever they want. On the other hand, they can go to cool places to record their videos. This brings them not only joy but also money from making them.

In a nutshell, ‘Fame’, ‘Finance’ and ‘Free time’ are the key motives that push teenagers into becoming YouTubers. Thank you.
Good morning everyone, I am glad that I can share with you the person I admire the most in this meeting of the local history society. If I am to describe this admirable person, I would say he is the M-E-T-E-O-R with eternal trail. Meteor is a rock burning in space and becoming incandescent as it travels through the atmosphere. People call it a shooting star and believe that the one who is fortunate enough to meet meteors passing through atmosphere and manage to make a wish before it vanishes, can have the opportunity to achieve their wish. The person I am going to introduce made his wish through his personality traits and spirit. He was formidable as he was willing to pursue and comply with his ideal and dream, he was definitely an apposite role model for the juveniles of today. He once said, “Be clearly aware of the stars and infinity on high. Then life seems almost enchanted after all.” He had totally fulfilled this ambition and he is the famous artist, Vincent van Gogh.

M, he is a Meticulous man. He paid attention to every detail, even if it was the contour or the background, he was attentive to each stroke and we can see that he was drawing diligently. He used to study human anatomy before, and was an expert at portraying details, creating some exquisite paintings, he was perceptive at observation, always drew the essence out and brought the painting to life. We can see his superb drawing skills and sophisticated minutiae through his paintings. Despite his low reputation during his lifetime, he was still careful about each particular thoroughly.

E, he is Exuberant. Being addicted to theology insanely, cutting off his ear with a razor perceptually, shooting his own self and having committed suicide; in spite of straying out of the line, he was not crazy but exuberant. At least he knew what he was doing. Is cutting off the left ear insane? I think he was just trying to express his opinion in an extreme way! It also proved that he is not as unadorned as others. ‘What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything.’ His unwaveringly exuberant way of chasing his dream and achieving his goal ‘recklessly’ is what most people in society envy and yearn for. We all live in a highly competitive society, it is not surprising that we must look for a stable job to earn money if we want to have a better life. But in time, with the discouragement of parents opposing to the dreams we strongly have, with the repeatedly boring job exploiting our time to dream, with the unsuccessful cases of real life examples defeating our ideals, our passion fades away. We are all forced to renounce the enthusiasm of dreams to reality. What we can do is only adopt reality instead of rushing towards anything we want premeditatedly. But Vincent van Gogh, who faced no better situation than we are currently encountering, was still firm and maintained his high spirit toward his dream, he gave up a better livelihood, his renown and even his life, to achieve his dream. I am not telling you to be extreme like him, but at least, when we are wrestling with harsh reality, instead of simply raising the white flag, we should try our best to earn standing ovations for our exuberance, just like what Vincent van Gogh has done.

T, he is Tenacious. We all know that he got no fame, no one appreciated him and recognized the values of his pleasing painting including the artist Gauguin, and that’s why Gauguin refused to hold an art gallery with him. Although the artists who he admired repudiated him, he showed his determination with his left ear cut and kept on going on his artistic journey. He created over 2000 paintings throughout his life even though he had no fame; he adhered to trust that people would recognize him one day.
Vincent van Gogh said, “I don’t know anything with certainty, but seeing the stars makes me dream.” He succeeded by believing in himself. As for me, I always hang back when I encounter frustration and failure. Whenever I am looked down on or my idea is opposed, giving up would normally be my decision. I really wish I could have just hung in there for a little longer like this inspiring artist!

E, he Enlightens people after him like a light tower. His painting skills and method inspired a lot of artists nowadays, people have different afflatus from Van Gogh’s painting. Chaim Soutine was born in a poor family and was abused by his dad but then he became a famous artist in Paris by the enlightenment of expressionism. Wassily Kandinsky, as well, experienced the Russian Resolution, but he was enlightened by expressionism and established ‘The Blue Rider’, which was a famous artist group. Both of them were deeply influenced by Vincent van Gogh and became artists of expressionism. The guiding light of his goes beyond any time boundary, while enlightening generations of artists.

O, his Original drawing style. Van Gogh’s family is an artistic family. His dad, grandfather, and uncle were all successful art work businessmen. He could have followed the tradition and enjoyed a luxurious life. But money was not his interest. He was bold enough to defy family’s tradition and pursued his stumbling art life. As one of the representative figures of neo-impressionism and pioneer of expressionism, he craved for art experiences and education to gain his place in the field. Eventually he created a unique, original drawing style which contained copious elements, for instance, chromatology, ukiyo-e and pointillism. Deep down in his heart, he clearly knew that he had to embark on an uneasy road to bring originality. Nowadays, beauty seems to fall into the same universal standard. While Vincent van Gogh, a hundred years ago, was trying so hard to safeguard his originality, most people, in order to live up to the universal ‘standard’ of beauty, they even undergo cosmetic surgery to possess a face which is said to be ‘beautiful’. Some people may ask, “It’s a matter of freedom, on what ground can you be so solid to challenge my own will?” But to me, the true question that should be asked is, “Since we are all born different and unique, why are we so obsessed with making oneself to be exactly the same as others?” What Vincent van Gogh showed me is that everyone is unique and capable of creating their own features, we have to firmly stand on the ground of originality.

R, he is Resilient on his dream. He was entangled and enmeshed by the shade of depression and a series of mental illnesses. Even so, he never stopped creating new paintings. When he encountered failure, he went upstream and tried to find different ways to solve and surmount the obstacles. Lyrics of a song, ‘Vincent’ by Don Mclean, released in 1971, manifested his resolute belief, “They would not listen, they did not know how, perhaps they’ll listen now.” His last two pieces of artwork called ‘Wheat Field with Crows’ and ‘Garden of Daubigny’ were created in July, which was a month before his life ended. It showed that, even when he was threatened by the God of death, he was still implementing his ideal. Fortunately, Vincent van Gogh achieved it and his efforts were not in vain. He finally got famous, even though it was too late for him to enjoy the delight of being so, he would be satisfied with the result he had achieved.
Some people believe that if we manage to make our wish before the meteor or shooting star vanishes, our wish would come true. Van Gogh’s story showed that a dream coming true or not does not simply depend on luck, but also much hard work is needed. Today, Vincent van Gogh succeeded because of his God-given talent. He became a well-known artist with M-eticulous observation which created E-xuberant drawings. By his T-enacious E-nlightened understanding, he also preserved his O-riginal painting styles with his R-esilience. Vincent van Gogh saw the METEOR and made his wish, and the light of the METEOR reaches us a hundred years later. I saw the star last night as well and I made my wish. How about you?

Thank you.
5 Things You Didn’t Know About Me
Rachel Yu 4C

What do know about me? If all you know is my name, then reading this will definitely be a good chance for you to know more about me. Here are 5 facts about me!

I’m an absolute badminton lover! I have badminton training five times a week, and I have been playing badminton since I was in Primary 3. Although I’m not an expert in it, I still enjoy playing badminton. Especially when I win matches, I gain a big sense of achievement, which makes me feel really good. Not only that, playing badminton can also help me to relieve pressure and make new friends from different school teams and leagues too!

I also have a thing for Chinese penmanship. I started learning Chinese penmanship when I was 8, and it indeed changed me a lot. Due to some limits of Chinese characters, you should write them with your right hand to make them beautiful. The problem is I’m left-handed. Therefore, I kept writing with my left hand until the age of 12 when my teacher finally told me to try to write with my right hand. At that time, I struggled so much because I was worried that I was not capable of writing with my right hand at all. However, I overcame the challenge and now I am able to write with both of my hands, which initially I thought was impossible for me.

Another thing that makes me special is keeping exotic pets, such as snakes, rats and geckos. People who don’t know me well usually say something like, “That’s gross!” “Are you out of your mind?” But I don’t care what people say because I get to choose what I love, and I think they’re the most adorable pets in the world.

I became a huge fan of Arabic this summer! This is because I met a lot of friends from Saudi Arabia when I was in Canada. They’re my inspiration to start learning Arabic. Although there’s much room for me to improve, I won’t give up on Arabic. Since I started, I begin to think that learning a new language is always a good thing, I decide to learn more languages in the future.

One thing I really want to get rid of is my messiness. My desk, for instance, hasn’t been decluttered for a whole month. I clean up my desk only when it gets extremely messy and my mum starts scolding me and telling me to clean it up. However, I would say my desk is ‘somewhat organized’ since I can always find the stuff I want.

So that’s it! I’m a messy girl who plays badminton, loves Chinese penmanship, keeps exotic pets and loves learning new languages. If you’re interested about me, please feel free to talk to me and ask me about anything! I would love to know more about people around me as well.
5 Things You Didn’t Know About Me
4D Anakin Ho

It has been 9 years since I started my life in Pui Ching. However, throughout this time, I seldom talk about my off-campus life. Therefore, I think not many classmates know about me. So, today, I’m here to talk about 5 things that you don’t know about me.

First of all, I’m a Christian. I go to church every Saturday, sometimes Sunday. I participate in the Youth Fellowship. Also, I am a mentor to the K3 kids at Sunday School. Although I spend a lot of time at school, compared to it, I think church is more like my home. Probably because of the nature of things that we do at these two places. At school, most of the time, we need to have lessons. At church, we learn the word of God, not in the school atmosphere. It is more relaxing for me to stay at church instead of at school.

Secondly, I want to share that I love watching superhero movies. I am a big fan of Marvel Cinematic Universe. My favourite movie is Doctor Strange. There are a few reasons I love it. First, the visual effects, which has already been affirmed in the 2016 Oscar Awards. Also, in this movie, we can see the changes of Stephen Strange. From being an arrogant doctor to losing the weapon he used to survive, and even not believing in himself, then finally replacing his master, and finally becoming the Sorcerer Supreme - the change is very intense. This movie also introduced an actor, Benedict Cumberbatch, who now became the favourite actor of mine.

The third thing I want to share is I love playing with Gundam models. I have played with them since I was six years old. At that time, I didn’t include any additional procedure to add more details, but now I have started to learn more. Now, before I build a model, I will polish and colour the parts. Building models is not simply an interest, but also a training of my patience.

Moreover, I love playing the piano. I have been playing the piano for nine years. At first, I didn’t play for interest. I played it because of school requirements for many years, but later I started to grow interested. Unlike before, I would only practise before an exam, now I practise any songs that I love.

Lastly, I repeatedly watch the videos and films that I love over and over again. This is a bad habit. I know I have to drop it soon, and instead, I should be doing revision.

So these are the 5 things you didn’t know about me. Hope you enjoyed it.
Why Do Teenagers Want to be YouTubers?
4D Curtis Lau

In a recent research, 34% of the teenagers wanted to become a YouTuber, and 18% of them wanted to be a vlogger. Why is that so? A YouTuber is a professional who films edited videos or streams live videos about gaming, traveling and so on. YouTubers upload their videos to gain subscribers and their 'likes', and of course to make a profit. I am going to explain why a teenager will pursue a dream of becoming a YouTuber in three points - ‘C.A.T.’ – which represents three reasons. ‘C’ stands for ‘Cash’; ‘A’ stands for ‘Acclamation'; and ‘T’ stands for ‘Time.

First, ‘Cash’: many teenagers might want to become YouTubers simply because a YouTuber gains great profits to maintain a great, happy life. But what many teenagers have misunderstood is that they thought the profits are made quickly right after becoming YouTubers, but the truth is, they make very little as beginners. They spent years to finally become famous. A newbie YouTuber can never live with the little money made from YouTube videos. It requires great determination over years to become famous. But once, they hit it, they earn great profits and they can live a luxurious life.

‘Acclamation’ means fame. Many teenagers want to be YouTubers because they can become famous. Then they can receive presents from their fans and they will have countless subscribers on their account. But like all teenagers indulging themselves in chasing their dreams, they ignore the fact that it requires skills and high abilities to become YouTubers. As a gaming YouTuber, you must have great skills in the games; a travelling YouTuber must have the knowledge of different countries and a tech YouTuber must be IT savvy. However, once a YouTuber is equipped with all the knowledge and skills, coupled with great talents, they can gain fame and receive acclamation from many.

‘Time’ is another reason why teenagers want to to become YouTubers. A YouTuber can upload, at most, a 30-minute video per day, and they have so much free time to do what they want afterwards. That’s why teenagers see it as the best job ever, doing what they like and making great profits. But the truth is, even if it’s just a 5-minute video, a YouTuber might spend hours to edit before it’s ready to be uploaded. They might not have time to rest at the beginning of their career. However, with good time management, they can work for a living with what they like according to their own timetable with great flexibility.

‘C.A.T.’ is the three reasons why teenagers want to become YouTubers. They need to see the efforts behind the scenes. It can be a tiring job, but if you love this job, you can potentially have a happy work life.
The Man on the Moon
4E Avian Chan

Good morning everyone. Today I am going to tell you about the historical person I admire. Everyone has someone they admire, but mine, I think he is mighty and is a very unique one. He has helped humans to explore the universe, to let us learn more about the mysterious universe. He is the eldest son in his family and the fourth one to study in university.

He was born in 1930, in Wapakoneta, USA. He was good at technology and he studied in Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which is not easy to get in to study there. He was then a pilot in the US Army during the Korean War.

And yet, I haven’t introduced the name of this person. His name is Armstrong, Neil Alden Armstrong. There must be someone who hasn’t heard of his name before. But I am sure that after listening to his story, you will admire him like I do.

Armstrong became an astronaut in 1962. He worked for NASA and joined lots of astronaut training programmes, wishing to be a good astronaut. He kept joining courses and one day, the chance came right in front of him. He was chosen to be the commander for Apollo 11. Apollo 11 was a project that sent humans to the moon. Being the commander of Apollo 11 was a great honour because until now, nobody has gone to the moon after Armstrong did. Being the commander of the first manned lunar landing mission is the thing I am proud of him the most. On July 16, 1969, Armstrong landed the rocket, Eagle, onto the moon’s dusty surface with the words “That’s one small step for a man, one giant step for mankind.” Armstrong was the first astronaut to get off the Eagle and the first man to step on the moon. He then put a US flag on the moon. At the same time, people around the world were watching him through televisions. He became a public figure.

He then resigned from NASA 2 years later in 1971, and shield away from being a public figure. He then became a professor of aerospace engineering at the University of Cincinnati. He also joined lots of clubs. He was the chairman of a number of companies. He served on the National Commission on Space and the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident. Are you interested in him now? I have literally fallen in love with him. To someone who is that brilliant, he got a lot of awards, for example, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1969. Also, he received the Congressional Space Medal of Honour in 1978.

After introducing so many things about him, I think most of you must know his background clearly and maybe some of you have already begun to admire him like I do. If you ask me why I love and admire him so much, I would like to tell you two points and you’ll understand clearly. Firstly, as I am interested in the universe, I want to learn more about aviation, the Milky Way and the Galaxy. He enabled us to know more about the moon, and from that, we know more about the Space. He must be the idol of most of the students in aviation and aerospace engineering.

Secondly, when he stepped onto the surface of the moon, he said, “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.” This has been my motto every time I am making decisions and going to try something new. I would ask myself, Will it be good for humans? Will it hurt somebody? Will it be a giant leap for mankind after I learnt it and used it? And every time I’ll give myself an answer, that is “Yes, it will be a giant leap for mankind.” Armstrong’s words have become my strength every time I can’t make decisions, and they encourage me to continue doing things when I want to give up.

I do really admire Neil Alden Armstrong, without him, I can’t get through things easily. Without him being my strength, I think I can’t get anything done. Without him, human wouldn’t have known as much about the moon. Without him, the world would be a little bit different. With him, the world is completely different.
The SOUL that Reaches Hearts - Vincent van Gogh
4E Dora Lee

Good afternoon teachers and fellow students. I am really thrilled to have a chance to share with you in this meeting of the local history society. The historical person that I admire the most is the man who paints with his soul - Vincent van Gogh. His paintings move you. I've seen many famous paintings, but Vincent’s paintings are the only ones that touch my soul. Vincent van Gogh once said, 'I put my heart, my soul into my work, and have lost my mind in the process.' Even without reading descriptions about his paintings, when I look at them I could feel his expressions. As if his soul came out from the painting and met my soul. S-O-U-L, is a part of you that consists of your mind, character, thoughts, and feelings.

Sentimental Mind

Vincent van Gogh is a very sensible artist, especially when it comes to the expression of feelings through colours. As if his mind is composed of different colours. Delicate emotions derived from a multitude of experiences which greatly influenced his palette tone. In his early days, the colours on his palette were mainly dim and in a muddy tone as he was lost and was searching for inspirations. After he moved to Paris in 1886, new impressions and new people had an influence on his own work and inspired him to experiment freely. The dark tones quickly gave way to brighter and vivid colours. Vincent van Gogh put his soul and heart into his interest and devoted himself into it. He painted based on his own feelings, even when no one appreciated his work. This impresses me a lot as many painters’ drawings nowadays are based on public taste, unlike Vincent. His sentimental mind contributed to the exquisitely delicate and complex mind, allowing him to come up with masterpieces such as Starry Night.

Obdurate Character

Being obdurate means Vincent van Gogh is an assertive person. He did not hesitate in making any decision and wouldn't regret his own choice. He didn’t care about the consequences and did what he thought was right. The most representative incident was Vincent cutting off his left ear consciously. The reason is that he had a disagreement with his artist friend and they could not collaborate well. Although his stubbornness led to his almost unbearable physical pain, I truly admire his faithfulness to himself. Painters nowadays change their own style to please buyers. They see money more important than being faithful to their own style. Vincent was nothing like them. Back then, no one bought his paintings. He was so poor that he had his little brother pay for his daily life expenses. Though he was poor, he didn't alter his style just for a living. He inspires me to believe in myself and not to lose faith in my own belief even in hard times. This is why I admire Vincent so much. His obdurate character was undoubtedly a key to his success.

Unflagging Thoughts

Vincent van Gogh has thoughts of unflaggingness. He created more than 1600 sketches and paintings, but those that were sold could be counted on one's fingers, he even had to rely on his younger brother for financial support. Even though no one appreciated him, his enthusiasm for art never faded. Besides, Vincent always had wild plans and seemingly unreachable dreams of his own. Although he then found his dreams hard to pursue, he never let them drag him off track, but continued to prosecute the enthusiasm he had. He is not only the person I admire the most, but also
my role model. I once loved to play basketball, but as I faced a lot of failure during my time as a basketball player, I started to lose my enthusiasm for it. Therefore, I admire Vincent van Gogh for his never extinguishing passion for painting. I wish to be as unflagging as him.

**Lustrous Feelings**

Some people may see Vincent van Gogh as an artist with insanity. For me, I see him as a never fading star. Stars are said to be scars in the sky, they are planets that died millions of years ago but now we still see the light from them. In the whole wide world full of artists, Vincent van Gogh stood out and became the person that I admire the most. Not because of his mental illness that led to his tragic death, but the reason why he had to suffer from insanity. People may see insanity as a scar. However, insanity is the proof of the hard work and the endless effort that Vincent had put into his greatest interest, art. Vincent van Gogh said, “Painters being dead and buried, speak to a following generation or to several following generations through their works. In the life of the painter, death may perhaps not be the most difficult thing.” In Vincent, we see how painters speak to the following generations through their work. His lustrous feelings are vividly reflected in all of his paintings. When you look at his drawings, you feel his life, his emotions. Like I said, his soul touches yours. This is the biggest difference between him and the other painters and the reason why I admire him instead of other painters.

Many people believe that your soul continues to exist after death. Vincent van Gogh put his heart and soul into his paintings and once told his brother, ‘Paintings have a life of their own that derives from the painter's soul.’ In every painting of his, we see his soul. Vincent’s faithfulness in himself, his Sentimental mind, Obdurate character, Unflagging thoughts and Lustrous feelings, his SOUL, inspires me, and these are the greatest reasons for me to admire him, as well as setting him as my role model. Thank you!
What Can You Learn from Warren Buffett
4E Sonia Wong

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am Sonia Wong from Pui Ching Middle School. Before I start, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for giving me the time to share with you the person I admire. The person I admire most is Warren Buffett, and I am sure that all of you have heard his name. Buffett, who is the Chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, is considered one of the most successful investors of all time. He is also the third wealthiest person in the world, having a net worth of 84 billion US dollars. If you want to be as wealthy as Buffett, don’t miss even a word of what I am going to say.

Buffett showed his interest in business and investment at a young age. At the age of 11, he visited New York Stock Exchange, and he bought three shares of Cities Services Preferred for himself. In high school, he invested in a business owned by his father and bought a 40-acre farm when he was 14 years old with his savings. You will be surprised to know that by the time he finished college, he had saved $9800. Buffett showed his talent in business and investment and was brave enough to take risks.

I believe that many of us want to live like a billionaire but only if that is Buffett. Buffett doesn’t describe himself as frugal, just a man with simple tastes. Once he said, “Would 10 homes make me happier? Possessions possess you at a point. I don’t like a $100 meal as much as a hamburger from McDonald’s.” Buffett has McDonald’s breakfast every morning and has driven the same car for many years. Although Buffett maintains a frugal lifestyle, he is a philanthropist who has donated billions of US dollars to charity. Ladies and gentlemen, can you believe that a tycoon like him leads such a thrifty life? It is this attitude that I admire the most. It is this humility that I give him my deepest respect!

B.F. Skinner once said, “A failure is not always a mistake. It may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying.” Buffett faced failure in his life too. He was rejected from being admitted to the Harvard Business School and from being employed by a famous company. However, Buffett never gave up, and continued to strive for his goals until he succeeded later. Even a great person like him experienced failure, but what is more important is that his perseverance led him all the way to success. All roads lead to Rome. He showed me that as long as we don’t give up, we will reach our goals one day. It is just a matter of time. You see! He is now a well-known investor.

Buffett is one of the most successful people in the world because he’s made the choice to have great habits. Success is not an accident. If you want to be successful, you should work hard and prepare yourself. One day, your effort will pay off. Thank you very much!
Revealed Shadow
4E Vivian Yu

Our story is about a house, a small house, and the people who live in the house. From a distance, it presents itself like so many other houses all over the world: safe, comfortable and full of love. Getting closer, though, you start seeing the shadow underneath.

Last Sunday, I enjoyed the Netflix time with my family. We watched the drama series, Riverdale, which my sister, Jennifer, was obsessed with so much.

"Oh my go - sh. Jughead is so handsome!" Jennifer said innocently.

"Shut up Jen. Be quiet and let us finish the episode!" I shouted back.

“Nah, unless Jughead was next to me now," Jennifer responded mischievously.

Clink! Glass was broken. A boy was thrown out from the TV screen. A long silence surrounded the house. I took a careful look at him. Slowly, carefully, step by step. An ordinary dark grey knitted hat with some pins on it, curly brown hair, vampire-white skin, a casual hoodie, denim jeans and a pair of boots.

"Is - is he Jughead?" Jennifer was scared. "His knitted hat ... also the pins ..."

The boy showed a painful face, shook his head and looked around with a surprised look. "He seems so scared," mother said. He tried to stand up but he failed. His left leg was bleeding, maybe because of the broken glass. My father immediately got a first-aid box from the bathroom as he does every day in the hospital.

"Sir, don’t worry. I'm a doctor. May I help you?" my father said to the mysterious boy. The boy nodded, saying nothing. What a weird boy, I thought. My sister enthusiastically asked many questions as she thought he was Jughead Jones from Riverdale. The unknown boy finally spoke, "Where is my brother?" with his loudest voice.

We were confused. My sister grabbed my hand and ran into the bedroom. "I think his brother has been kidnapped by his father. As his father is a leader of the Southern Serpents, trying to find one of his children to inherit his gang. We must help him."

"No way, it's too dangerous."

"HELPPPPPP!" yelled my mother.

We ran back to the living room. A strong arm came out of the TV screen and caught the boy's arm. All of us tried so hard to pull the boy back and the old man who had strong, gigantic arm came out too.

He barked, "Jughead, you must come with me. It's time to learn how to be the head of the Serpents."
"No, father. I don't want to be a gangster. I want to be a writer. I don't want violence and killing," the boy cried out. At that moment, all of my family were standing away from them as far as we could to avoid getting hurt, shaking our bodies.

"I hate you. I have hated you ever since you left mother alone with her illness. I hate you because you punched mother’s face to release your anger. I hate you because you left home and never came back. You don’t deserve to have a family!” he yelled, crying.

After a few minutes of silence, the old man finally began, "Son ..." he tried to finish his sentence. "I'm sorry. I think I should not bother you and your family anymore ... I'm not a good father nor a good husband. It's time for me to leave, and not come back anymore." He then jumped back into the TV, leaving Jughead alone in the living room. He was crying.

All of us were worried about him. My mother asked him at last, "Would you like to stay for dinner tonight?" We hugged him tightly. The air in the living room became warmer.

"Thank you, nice to meet you guys. I'm Jughead Jones," he finally introduced himself, full of good faith.

A revelation of his dark past turned out to be a bright future.
Good morning principal, teachers and my fellow schoolmates.

I am Zoe Chan from Class 4F. It is my privilege to be invited to this assembly and talk about the person I admire. Before I start, I would like to ask you a question – who do you admire? At this moment, there might be a list of names in your mind. You may respect the well-known scientist, Thomas Edison, for inventing the light bulb which has improved our living, or you may venerate the famous playwright, William Shakespeare, for writing such masterpieces like The Merchant of Venice, and Romeo and Juliet. Most people you admire usually share something in common – they have great achievements and influence others’ lives in various aspects. However, among so many successful people, the person I admire the most is, on the contrary, a rather simple woman. She isn’t the cleverest nor is she the prettiest. She is an ordinary woman that others barely notice in the crowd. She is my mother.

To me, my mother is an outstanding woman. She works hard for the family and never complains. As a nurse, she has varying work hours and sometimes has to work night shifts. She is always busy dealing with not only the patients in hospital, but also their families. When I was younger, she would get home as soon as she left the office only to look after me, entertain me with stories and prepare meals. She even brought me to the park almost every day so that I could exercise more. She has devoted lots of time to the family, offering me with the best. Like others, she has 24 hours a day, but this iron lady can always get the things done and strike a balance between family and work.

My admiration for my mother also originates from her willingness to improve herself. Standing in front of you is a prefect, who is supposed to behave well and act as your role model. However, you may be flabbergasted to know that I actually spoke foul language during my early childhood. At home, my mother used to swear and I learnt to curse others with disrespectful words. When she realised she had set a bad example to me, she took the initiative to change herself. Then she knew she ought to rectify my behaviour. We came up with a punishment scheme that the one who spoke foul language had to give $10 to the other person. It worked well and both of us have never sworn since then. My mother has taught me a lesson. It is okay that one makes mistakes or misbehaves, but the most importantly thing is we always have to be ready to change and improve ourselves.

Lastly, my mother is always my greatest support. When I was still a kid, she was always my homework assistant. I think all of you still remember how unreasonably difficult the P.1 mathematics homework were. Whenever I faced them, I wanted to cry. Mum would always be there with me to work out the solutions to the questions. She could have sat in front of the television and given herself an hour of entertainment after a tough day of work; she could have lied down on her bed to take a break. Yet, she chose not to because she wanted to experience ups and downs in my life with me. Now, I can no longer count on her to do my homework, but other problems like peer relationship, future plan and so on, also bring worries to me. Mum, as usual, is beside me, listening to me patiently and giving me advice. Words cannot describe how thankful I am to have such unconditional love, but I am sure all of you will understand.
‘If you can’t do great things, do small things in a great way.’ My mother may not have great accomplishments. She has not broken any world record nor influenced the world like those great female leaders, such as Theresa May and Angela Merkel. However, she is the person who deserves my deepest respect and appreciation. She has spent 15 years bringing me up from that naive child to a mature teenager. I admire her for all the effort she has contributed, her selflessness and unconditional love to the family. From the bottom of my heart, I would like to take this opportunity to express my greatest gratitude to my mum. Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure there must be a person like this in your life. Don’t wait. Express your respect and love to him or her.

Thank you very much.
The Emoji Movie – A Plotless Ripoff
4F Michael Lai

Let me just put this out there – I wouldn’t even try to make a film which solely attracts audiences by being relatable or by imitating other successful films over its storyline and moral. So I apologize beforehand that this film review will be more or less a criticism. If there are any changes I would like to make, I would just scrap the whole film and start afresh with another plot line.

Let me start by giving you a rundown of the whole movie. Gene Meh, who is a “meh” expression emoji, as his name implies, lives inside Textropolis, a digital city or a texting application inside the phone of a user named Alex. Gene somehow is able to make multiple expressions which is considered as a malfunctioning emoji. When he was chosen to be scanned for Alex’s messages, he freaked out, causing a havoc in the headquarters and got wanted by Smiler, who is a slightly psychotic smiley emoji, bumped into Hi-5, left Textropolis, and found the infamous hacker emoji Jailbreak. They need to reach Dropbox to fix Gene and Hi-5 but stumble into various apps. In the end, Gene takes out Smiler, saves the whole phone from getting erased and Gene accepts himself for who he is and is celebrated by all emojis.

This movie tried so hard to appear to be contemporary and trendy, desperate to appeal to smartphone users, and wanting to be relatable to modern society. Turning something plotless into an animated film is not easy. The Lego Movie is a great example of how doing it right makes it one of the best animated films, but The Emoji Movie completely neglected the story and plot. It is painfully unoriginal. Basically the moral is “be the true you” which is, first of all, very cliché for animated films, but unlike other films which, at least, tried something fresher than just that narrative, The Emoji Movie does nothing brand new at all. Even the original movie, Cars from Disney Pixar, has a fish out of the water. The Emoji Movie is just full of memes, ‘extremely relevant viral videos’ and irritable puns.

This movie also just feel like a total ripoff of other successful movies. The idea of heading out of Textropolis and getting lost out in the wilderness is pretty similar to Inside Out if you think closely, except Inside Out does something more by talking about emotions and mental illnesses but The Emoji Movie is just really a shallow in comparison. Jailbreak’s character design is undoubtedly a ripoff of Wyldstyle from The Lego Movie as seen from the colour scheme to character personalities.

The worst part of the whole film is the embedded advertising, or should I say, the whole film is a compilation of advertisements. YouTube, Twitter, Spotify, Instagram, Facebook are all product placements, it even has Candy Crush, Just Dance and Dropbox. It’s direct product endorsement. The film actively used these apps and demonstrated their functions and benefits. This is the sort of movie which focuses on commercials than storyline, which I seriously despise. After all this ranting on the movie, overall it is terrible and I would rather just stick with movies from Disney and Pixar.
Why Teenagers are Obsessed with Fashion Hype

5A Christy Cheung

In today’s age of social media and “hypebeasts”, trendy branded products have become ubiquitous in our society, especially among millennials. The prevalence of highly sought after brands such as Supreme and Off White has caused the proliferation of adolescents who regularly spend an enormous amount of money on goods that they shouldn’t even be able to afford. Let’s take a look at why millennials are so obsessed with branded products.

The prevalence of social media platforms is without a doubt one of the major reasons why adolescents crave branded goods. Nowadays, the lives of celebrities and key opinion leaders can conveniently be seen on apps such as Instagram and Snapchat. Because of the omnipresent posts by these so-called trendsetters, it has become easier than ever for teenagers to be influenced by their idols. Consequently, teenagers will have the tendency to mimic the looks of their idols and jump on the bandwagon of whatever trend is popular among the tastemakers. Hence, a sizable fan base of these trendy brands will then emerge. In some cases, millennials will even line up outside a shop just to get the chance to purchase a limited edition t-shirt that has been worn by the influencers.

Peer pressure is another main factor that leads youngsters to be attracted to branded products. Since teenagers spend most, if not all, of their time with their friends, they are easily affected by one another. As evident among youngsters, people who appear to be fashionable and stylish often tend to stand out and be popular in their social circles. With that said, it is only natural for young people to have the desire to dress “cool” so as to impress their peers. In other words, peer pressure pushes young folks to yearn for branded products such as a Supreme hoodie or a pair of rare Nike sneakers to achieve a sense of satisfaction and boost their false sense of self-esteem.

While there is nothing wrong with trying to obtain aesthetic pleasure through the purchase and wearing of hyped fashion products, teenagers should ask themselves a simple “why” when they decide to spend thousands of dollars on a piece of clothing item that probably only costs no more than 50 bucks to produce. Is their money well spent on some quality products or are they just blindly following suit? This is what they should think about.
It Blossomed
5A Grace Sze

She hadn’t slept well in the last few nights. The nightmare kept haunting her when she nearly fell asleep. In the nightmare, she was standing at the crossroads. She kept running towards the light at the end of a narrow path. But when she finally got there, what she saw was the bones of her first husband. And on top of the pile of bones, a thorny stem blossomed into a bloody-red rose. Then, she was roused from sleeping, sitting bolt upright, panting.

Her gasp woke the man sleeping next to her. She wiped her sweat from her forehead while the man was rubbing his eyes. He rose and stroked her head tenderly. The man yawned and muttered, “Are you OK, Jacqueline?” He took a peek of the clock and mumbled, “You are always like this these few nights. Is something worrying you?” He took in a deep breath and asked, “Would you like to have a cup of milk? Perhaps it would help with your sleep.”

Jacqueline chuckled to herself when she saw his sleepy face. She whispered to him, “I am okay, Johnny, I still have some work to do tomorrow.” Lying on his chest, she snickered so quietly that the man didn’t notice that a syringe was being pressed against his neck...

“I don’t know about that. I slept at 12 o’clock yesterday. I didn’t know where he went last night. Maybe he went to the bar or the restaurant. I...I...had no...,” Jacqueline sobbed her story out, with a tissue paper in her hand to wipe her tears.

“Madam, please come with us to the police station to take a more detailed statement for the investigation of your husband’s death,” the police officer asked politely.

“Yes, of course,” Jacqueline replied. Everyone saw her tears but nobody noticed that the corners of her mouth were curving up so much that even her dimples had become visible.

After an hour’s interview at the police station, Jacqueline finally reached home. She pushed open her front door. The sadness on her face was gone. She sneered while squinting. She was studying the syringe on the desk. What she didn’t notice was a pair of eyes peeping at her through the windows.

Night fell again. The nightmare tonight seemed different. It’s more horrible. She felt that she was floating midair. A pair of hands was holding her neck tightly. She felt breathless. No air could enter her lungs. “This must be how death feels like!” she lamented. It was so real. Was it really a dream?

She opened her eyes. What appeared in front of her nearly freaked her out. She saw faces of different men whom she had known so well. They glared at her with their bloody lifeless eyes, bellowing different aliases she had used before. Marie, Tiffany, Jenny, Jessica, Annie and the name she used this time, Jacqueline. They scrunched up their face as if they were a devil. Their skin had detached from their faces. Some of their flesh and bones were exposed in the holes on their skull.

Her tiny face turned pale at once when she heard them call her with those “names”. She smiled bitterly and murmured, “I am sorry about everything.” A teardrop ran down her cheek and landed on the soft quilt. When the tear permeated the cover of the quilt, everything had ended.
“At 11 o’clock in the morning, a dead body was discovered in the apartment...” The camera panned towards Jacqueline’s home.

“The police have uncovered all the murder weapons that have been used in the last five murders committed by the notorious serial killer. They are certain that the person who died in this house, Jacqueline Fong, is the serial killer that they have been looking for...” On the bed, a blood-red rose was found blooming at the spot where Jacqueline’s tear had landed. A man covered in a long black robe appeared from the dark corner and bowed to Jacqueline’s dead body while holding his hat in one of his hands. He took that blooming flower away and left through the main door.

Karma comes first circle.
Say No to Knockoffs
5B Elim Tse

Pete is a secondary school student who wears branded fashion sports products whenever he doesn’t have to wear his school uniform. He is always well-dressed, in slang - ‘fresh to death’. Yet, if you take a closer look at his outfit, you will find that the fancy branded clothing items are actually knockoffs – replicas produced illegally by counterfeiters and with materials of poor quality. You may be puzzled by such behavior and wonder why he does so, but the truth is that he is not the only one doing it. Take a look around and you will probably find many of your peers, whose wardrobes are crammed with trendy items, yet are all counterfeit. Have you ever wondered what the motives are behind such behavior?

It is beyond dispute that peer pressure is one of the main factors causing teenagers to succumb to short-lived fashion trends. Peer influences are often most impactful on adolescents due to the simple fact that they spend most of their time interacting with their peers, and thus will inevitably be affected by decisions and behaviors of their counterparts. In order to seek their peers’ recognition, many teenagers just cannot help, but blindly jump on the bandwagon and imitate their peers in order to be considered part of the crowd. Such pursuit for peers’ validation has indeed become an addiction among many secondary school students.

Thanks to the obsession with branded products, students who are not able to afford the ridiculously high prices of these products will have the tendency to buy counterfeits as a means to stay relevant among their peers. They regard these fake goods acceptable because these products allow them to appear “cool” in front of their peers without having to spend an astronomical amount of money. A case in point, the highly sought-after brand, Supreme, is currently one of the most counterfeited clothing labels that has been copied by illegal and immoral manufacturers and retailers to cater for superficial kids who want to follow suit.

However, there is more to the hurt that counterfeit economy makes, especially if you take the motives of the original designers into consideration. In order to capitalize on their creations, most designers try to add meaning to their designs by conveying a message in clothing items, as seen in graphic t-shirts. In other words, these designers want the consumers of their products to identify themselves with the brands’ values and philosophies. But what is happening among many students who think they are cool and fashionable hipsters is that they are mindlessly going after the looks and completely ignoring the intention of the brands, and consequently neglecting the fact that fake products are actually detrimental to the designers and brands.

If we can start to realize what we wear is not only about the look but also what it represents, we will be able to put an end to the growing phenomenon of students wearing counterfeits. After all, being an educated and ethical consumer is way “cooler” than being a blind follower of trends who eventually gets teased by others for wearing fake clothes.
It’s Time to Stop Ignoring the Homeless
SC Kayla Cheng

Dear Editor,

I am writing with reference to Mr. Chan Kwan Ming’s letter, “How long can Hong Kong afford to keep ignoring its homeless and working poor?” (August 30, 2018). In his letter, Mr. Chan touched on multiple factors that have led to the dire homelessness issue, which remains a prevalent phenomenon in different districts in Hong Kong, specifically in districts such as Sham Shui Po, where majority of the impoverished reside. I would like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts on what our society as a whole can do to alleviate this exacerbating problem.

In the short run, a temporary yet effective measure for the government to seriously consider is providing transitional housing units for the homeless. For instance, the government can revive abandoned factory buildings as well as school campuses in various parts of Hong Kong and turn them into shelters. This way, not only can obsolete buildings be revitalized, but more importantly, the problem of homelessness can also be immediately eased off by a great deal because people who are currently homeless will get the chance to apply for ample and affordable housing units that are tailored for them, allowing them to move out from the deplorable and unhygienic living conditions that deprive them of many of their basic needs.

While the homeless population waits for the government to implement policies that are beneficial to their demographic, we, as regular citizens with empathy for our fellow Hongkongers and the ability to assist them, can also do our part to help them get by more easily through their daily lives. Some may think that social services at the grassroots level can only do so much for the homeless community. Yet, if we all join hands to raise the awareness of the public and actively participate in constructive community work, the effect of our support will surely snowball and make a difference, be it trivial or impactful. It’s important to remember that even the slightest act of support, from community work, such as paying the homeless regular visits, to donations of daily necessities, such as food and hygiene products, can play an important part in our attempt to integrate the homeless population into our society.

Turning a blind eye at one of the most urgent social issues we are facing will never make the situation better; but awareness and participation will. I strongly urge the government take the initiative to take better care of the vulnerable in our city by providing them with temporary shelters. I sincerely hope that all capable citizens of Hong Kong can give a helping hand to the needy by showing them that we care.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Journey of the Karma Bus
5D Charis Chan

It was a blisteringly hot day. I was standing in the narrow aisle of a crowded bus, heading to school. We were packed like sardines on the bus. I gasped for some fresh air and looked around for a seat.

Luckily, I spotted a seat next to a boy at the back of the bus so I walked over and sat next to him. The boy is one of my schoolmates as we’re wearing the same uniform. When I had just settled in, he turned to me and bellowed, “I didn’t say you can sit here, Chink!” I was extremely offended.

“Hey! It’s a very catty thing to say. I need your apology right now. I mean it.” I said solemnly.

However, the boy shouted at the top of his lungs, “Get out of my seat!” This took me aback. Oh my God! I couldn’t believe he just barked at me on the bus. I felt that everyone was staring at me. I froze up, not knowing what to do, but I knew I stood a chance of winning this boy in a fight.

Before I found a way out, he suddenly walloped me! “Ouch!” I squealed. It was extremely painful, but I managed to put on a brave face and staggered away. I believe God would grind slow but sure, so I waited.

A few weeks later, I met that boy on the bus again. This time, I saw him smoking weed. At the next bus stop, a little Asian child got on the bus and approached the empty seat beside him. The boy from my school unexpectedly took a lighter from his pocket and smacked the kid in her face with it. The kid started to cry and all the passengers on the bus gazed at the pair. The mother of the kid slapped the boy on his face and stomped off the bus with her daughter at the next bus stop. I was shocked! I couldn’t believe any of my schoolmates could do such a mean thing bullying a little girl in broad daylight.

The picture of the boy smacking the little girl kept occupying my mind. I felt so sorry for the little girl. While I was thinking about the incident, one of my classmates, John yelled, “Peter has been expelled. He’s gone!” John continued, “The school received a complaint that Peter had smoked weed and inflicted bodily harm on a child on a bus. Our school has investigated the case and found an eye witness who confirmed the accusation.” I must confess that I was thrilled to bits when I heard the news. I believed his sin had made its own hell. The universe had served him the revenge that he deserved.

Now Peter was expelled from school and I was free to ride the bus in peace. Waiting for the bus, I meditated. There’s always a natural law of karma that ensures despicable people, who hit someone where it hurts, will end up broken and lonely. Yeah! As the saying goes, “The karma bus might delay due to high demand. But no worries, it’ll come!”
Dear Editor,

‘Snowflake Generation’ is a stereotype on today’s youth. The younger generation is often associated with egocentricity, emotional vulnerability and narcissism. I think these disparaging labels are not fair for our young people. Here, I hope to dispel the general misunderstanding about the next generation.

First and foremost, there is a misconception that the younger generation is less resilient. The older generation, when they were young, lived in periods of austerity. Children’s essential living condition could not even be assured, especially children who were born to a large family with more than five kids. Moreover, the government did not have enough resources to let all children receive education. As a result, they were trained to be tough. However, modern living standards are much better than that in the past. The new generation is born with a silver spoon in the mouth and their parents guarantee that they have enough food and clothes. This explains why they are not as tough as the older generation.

In fact, the challenges that the younger generation face are different in nature. They mainly face challenges in their studies. In addition, their parents always compare them with other students. I think the immense pressure on studies is a test to their stamina and in return strengthens them. Consequently, when they are faced with the same problem, they are patient and have the capability to solve it.

Secondly, the younger generation is not as self-centred as people think. Maybe sometimes, they have their unique and distinct opinions, but they are actually not egocentric. Many of them are involved in voluntary work and political movements and activities, in which they show their care and concerns about others and society. On top of this, their training in school requires them to socialize with schoolmates and collaborate with one another as a team. They also communicate with their classmates and exchange ideas with their peers, from which they learn to compromise and reach consensus.

I think the younger generation is positive and enthusiastic. They are humble and good team players. I cannot bear to see them being labelled ‘snowflake generation’.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Counterfeits Shouldn’t Be Legitimized
5D Kelly Leung

With fashion fads that come and go at an unprecedentedly swift rate, standards of fashion have changed dramatically over the recent years, thanks in part to the prevalence of the social media. But one thing that has withstood the test of time is people’s obsession with branded products. In fact, wearing branded clothing items has become a ubiquitous phenomenon amongst adolescents, which I’d like to discuss here.

Due to peer pressure, adolescents often have the tendency to be noticeable and stand out from their peers by imitating what the “cool kids” of the “in-crowd” do. In order to look different and unique, many teenagers will jump on the bandwagon of whatever that is trending and sport outfits consisting of branded products as a means to seek validation from their friends. They may have the misconception that wearing expensive clothing items equates to “coolness”. However, most teenagers who are obsessed with these popular branded clothes are actually simply following suit under their peers’ influence. Simply put, they are just wearing what they wear because their friends are wearing them, without knowing what the brands they are wearing represent. While some of these students are able to afford the extremely expensive price tags of these branded clothes, most of them cannot and cannot help but turn to counterfeit goods. In fact, purchasing and using counterfeit products has long been a widespread phenomenon among adolescents. But just because it’s common, does it mean it is acceptable? This is something worth our discussion.

When teenagers purchase knockoff products, not only are they supporting illegal businesses, but they are actually showing their lack of character. A lot of the current popular brands among teenagers such as Supreme, are sought after not simply because of the hipster looks their clothes provide, but more so because of the stories and messages conveyed through their designs. In other words, for a piece of garment to be of value, there must be an intention and story behind the design. Yet, when people buy a knockoff product, all they are doing is simply chasing after the look while completely disregarding the messages that the brands want to deliver. With that said, aren’t the teenagers who succumb to replicas just blind followers of trends without knowing what their clothes actually represent?

As the cliché saying goes, “clothes make the man”. But it is true only when the man is educated to choose his clothes consciously. It is understandable that adolescents sometimes feel the need to get recognition from their peers through their outfits and looks, but what they have to understand is that being an imitator will only show people how ignorant they are, not how cool or special they think they are.
Dear Editor,

I refer to the letter “How long can Hong Kong afford to keep ignoring its homeless and working poor?” by Mr. Chan on August 20, 2018. In his letter, Mr. Chan mentioned the major causes of homelessness in Hong Kong. I would like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts on what Hong Kong as a collective can do to relieve the problem.

Due to rapid inflation, skyrocketing property prices and stagnant income levels, more and more Hongkongers are living under the poverty line. Meanwhile, many of them cannot even afford the rent of a caged home or subdivided flat, and have no choice but end up living on the streets. As a result, homelessness has become a serious social problem to which many citizens and even our government has turned a blind eye. Yet, how can a city that claims to be a metropolis and international financial hub neglect its most needy group of people?

There are actually many ways for Hong Kong citizens like you and me to give a helping hand to the homeless and underprivileged demographic of our city. For instance, we can provide them with tangible items, such as food and daily necessities. Meanwhile, there are also intangible ways we can help them. For instance, we can pay these shelterless people regular visits to communicate with them and show them support, so that they won’t feel excluded from their local community.

The Hong Kong government, on the other hand, must acknowledge the severity and urgency of the homelessness issue and devise both short-term and long-term policies that will significantly alleviate the dire problem, if not completely eliminate the problem. While long-term proposals such as building new public housings is one of the main feasible options, it is of utmost importance that the government come up with temporary solutions that can immediately and effectively ease the problem by providing the homeless population with a safe and acceptable living condition. Turning abandoned factory buildings into transitional housing units, for example, is a highly viable measure that the Hong Kong government should consider.

Sending more homeless to the streets or turning a blind eye to their situation is only going to make things worse for the homeless in our city. Yet, if we all begin to realize that we are all part of the solution, it’s only a matter of time that the homeless can see a better tomorrow where they no longer have to roam around our city just to find a safe habitat.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dear Editor,

Recently, the younger generation has been dubbed the ‘snowflake generation’, meaning that they are usually less resilient and more self-centred than the older generation. Nevertheless, this label is unfair to them. I am writing to express grievance on this issue.

First and foremost, the younger generation tends to be less resilient than the older generation because of the differences in their upbringing. The older generation might have encountered hardships such as wars, water rationing and so on. These hardships made them more resilient. Whenever they face problems, they will take the bull by its horn and face up to them. On the other hand, the so-called ‘snowflake generation’ are born between the late 80s and 90s during the heyday of Hong Kong. At that time, people lived in a city flooded with different kinds of materials. The stories of the older generation just seem whimsical to the younger generation as they have never encountered those trials and tribulations. Under this condition, how can they be trained to become as resilient as the older generation?

Secondly, the changes in family structure are also reasons which have turned them into being egocentric. In the past, there may be more than three to four children in one family, which means they often need to share things with their siblings. In some of the families, the oldest one used to take care of the whole family because their parents had to go out and work until night, let alone those living in a single-parent family. In this case, people in the past knew how to share and think about others and were more altruistic. Nevertheless, along with the changes in family make-up, the number of children in one’s family has started to decrease to only one to two children in a family. These ‘precious jewels’ are pampered with all their parents’ love and are often given the best, be it education, toys and so on. Children are spoilt, making them more self-absorbed. Unavoidably, parents have some responsibility in creating the ‘snowflake’.

Last but not least, instead of being more self-centred, it is better to say that the younger generation is independent. Nowadays, alongside the advancement of technology, youngsters tend to do their work themselves rather than together as they are able to find most information needed just by a clicking the mouse. They do not need to associate with others in order to do projects or seek advice. As a result, they become more independent and focus more on their own business, thus paying less attention to others. However, independence is not equivalent to being self-centred. Instead, it means people do not collaborate with others.

The public’s perception of the younger generation is ill-founded. I strongly request that they should first clarify the term ‘snowflake’ and stop tarring the whole ‘gen z’ with the same brush.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my great grievance on the viral comment claiming that the younger generation is less resilient and more self-centred. Youngsters nowadays are dubbed the ‘snowflake generation’ as a result of their personality. I would like to draw public attention to the stereotypical appellation and protest against this improper image of the younger generation.

To commence with, the crux of the problem is that people always make generalizations on youngsters. There is no arguing that some of the youngsters these days are perceived to be over-sensitive, intolerant of disagreement and lack foresight. On the contrary, most of the youth work hard to pursue their dreams. While adults are blaming how egocentric the teens are, they always fail to address the positive attributes of this generation. According to recent research conducted, 69% of the adolescents who belong to the generation Z (those born after 1995) would rather have their own workspace. That shows that they possess the capabilities of working independently. They are also more competitive and all-rounded. By turning a blind eye to these positive traits and stigmatize them as ‘snowflake’ is totally unjustified.

Another reason I resent the derogatory label of ‘snowflake generation’ is that the public impose their prescribed standard on the younger generation. The older generation always point their finger at them when they fall short of the so-called ‘standard’. It is unfair to judge youngsters when their personality and dreams are still being shaped. There is no point in comparing the older with the younger generation. Under no circumstances should people criticize the younger generation just because they are too young.

On top of the above, people never identify the main culprit behind the problem. It is crystal clear that parents, schools, and society play a pivotal role in building their characters and their outlook on life during their upbringing. Those who deemed the ‘snowflake’ generation as less resilient and self-centred should also reflect upon themselves as they are the ones who breed this generation of youngsters: parents hover over the kids and never let them face difficulties by themselves; schools inflate grades fearing that students cannot handle the harsh reality of a low grade; society risk too little, rescue too quickly and rave too easily. Being over-protected, youngsters tend to be less resilient and more self-centred. Paradoxical as the appellation ‘snowflake’ generation sounds, society cannot pass the buck.

Simply calling the younger generation ‘snowflake’ is unjust, biased and one-sided. The problems beneath the surface may need further improvement and there is no room for procrastination. We should face the harsh reality squarely and help our younger generation.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Report on Investigation into
Why the Rising Number of Young Internet Addicts
5E Katherine Chan

Introduction
Since the number of young internet addicts all over the world is increasing exponentially, internet addiction has come under the spotlight. It is universally acknowledged that the phenomenon will jeopardize adolescents’ physical and psychological health, which is desperate enough to spawn courses of action to tackle the problem. Therefore, a series of surveys were conducted to look into the situation in details. The aim of this report is to give an overview of internet addiction and give relevant recommendations.

Findings
Regarding the reasons for Internet addiction, the findings show that high accessibility of the Internet and social media apps attribute to the problem. With the advent of cutting-edge technology, an array of social platform apps have flooded the market. They have breathed new life into our daily life with a diversity of entertainments such as video games, online chatting, movies, and so forth. But behind the beautiful facade, the downside is prominent- much of the information is addictive. Not realizing the dangers lurking behind some websites, some adolescents get hooked on them unwittingly. They spend ample time on their mobile devices compulsively. The addictive information gives them instant gratification which prompts them to bury themselves in the cyberspace.

In addition, some internal factors also contribute to the situation. The most salient factor is teenagers’ lack of emotional support. The findings show that about 70% of internet addicts are suffering from depression. Depression implies that most of them are pessimistic and socially withdrawn. According to the survey conducted by some renowned psychologists at Harvard University, parental negligence is one of the most decisive factors with leads to adolescents’ depression. It will not be surprising to learn that some parents place their children in daycare centres. In this day and age, fast-paced lifestyle deprives many parents of their quality time to care for their children. As a result, adolescents cannot find any outlet for their negative moods, leading them to withdraw from society and live only in their own world. The feeling of insecurity can only be alleviated when they immerse themselves into the virtual world. Thus, they turn to the Internet to fill the void and get emotional support from the strangers behind the screen.

Internet addiction also stems from some external factors. The findings show that many Internet addicts create an avatar and live a second life online because they feel inferior to their peers. These addicts do not have excellent achievements in their school life and bear enormous peer pressure in their real life. However, their avatars online transform them into brave, confident, capable and intelligent characters. They get recognition, respect and exceptional achievements in the cyberspace. By doing so, they can escape from the painful reality.
Recommendations
All in all, Internet addiction poses a dire threat to youngsters. Prompt actions should be taken to rectify the problem. The implication of these findings is that both parents and schools should intervene to tackle the situation. It is advisable for parents and schools to have more quality communication with teenagers. It is suggested that parents should spare more time with their children. This provides an outlet for the desperate adolescents to express themselves in order that they feel they are living in the bosom of their families. In that case, they will no longer resort to the Internet to seek emotional support.

For schools, it is proposed that budget should be earmarked for organizing seminars, courses and talks to instruct students on the proper ways of using the Internet. Talks and seminars will raise students’ awareness of the use and the potential danger of the Internet. Teachers should encourage students with low self-esteem to establish some healthy hobbies, such as joining school clubs and taking part in voluntary work.
An Irredeemable Encounter  
5E Josephine Lai

The suffocating heat bore down on me like a heavy blanket. Every inch of my body was drenched with sweat, and my thoughts were hazy and muddled.

Trudging through the streets of Tsim Sha Tsui, the sounds of heavy traffic blared in my ears. Having been knackered by an all-nighter at the office, I could think of nothing more inviting than my plush bed at home. My parents were in dire financial straits when I was young, so I’d always known that I had to achieve perfect grades, acquire a high paying job and climb the ranks of the social ladder. Pouring my heart and soul into work was the only way I could repay my parents.

As I passed the Peninsula Hotel, I paused to marvel at its grandeur. Eight years ago, a night’s stay here would’ve been an opulence we couldn’t afford. Maybe now, though, I could indulge myself in a room for my parents as a token of my appreciation.

Behind me, a car raced past, ruffling my hair, and halted to a stop a few feet away. I turned and did a double take as I realized it was a Bugatti Divo, with a matte black body and electric blue accents. I tried to act nonchalant, tilting my head to sneak a peek at the two figures who were getting out of the vehicle. A young man in a charcoal gray suit stepped out of the driver’s seat, his gelled black hair glinting in the daylight. As he moved around the front of the car to escort the woman vacating the passenger seat, I got a glimpse of his face and had to stifle a gasp. His face had matured tremendously since I last saw him, but his features were unmistakable; it was none other than my younger brother.

He perched a hand on the lower back of the woman, who had dark hair styled into an elegant updo, and wore a resplendent crimson dress that was probably worth more than a month of my salary. She beamed at him and leaned in for a passionate kiss that had me looking away in discomfort. As my brother guided her towards the entrance of the hotel, a sudden burst of courage had me calling after my sibling.

“Daniel!” He turned to look at me, and as recognition bloomed in his face, his expression darkened.

“What are you doing here?” He asked quietly, his piercing gaze perturbing.

“I could ask you the same. You haven’t visited home in years. What happened?” His gaze fell to the ground, and I thought that perhaps he felt humiliated.

“We’ll talk about this later. I’m busy with a client right now.” His response caught me off guard. His body leaned away from me, and I realized that he was ashamed of me. He did not want to be associated with me at all.

“Client?” I looked the woman up and down, taking stock of the physical behavior of the two, and it dawned on me.

“What, you’re an escort now? You leave your family for five years and now you’re whoring around? What do you think father would say about this?”
The woman flinched, and I realized I had unintentionally raised my voice. A few butlers glanced at us, and I felt my self-consciousness start to creep in.

“Well, I’m sorry for not being as studious or hardworking in school as you were,” he hissed, “but this line of work hasn’t gotten me nowhere.” He nodded his head towards his sumptuous automobile. “So I’d appreciate it if you mind your own business and let me walk on my own path.”

As he began to walk away, I said, “Why did you leave?” Before the words had left my mouth, I already knew the answer.

“Do you know how desperate I was? How desolate I was around my friends, because I knew I was different? How I knew our family could never afford to send me on school trips, buy me a new uniform, or even a new pencil case?”

At that moment, a lost memory occurred to me. I could recall the chagrin in his eyes that night, when my parents were arguing over whether they could afford to send me to college. Daniel told me that no matter what, he had to leave that dump and become rich. I hadn’t taken his words seriously, which I would come to regret terribly.

I could have formulated countless spiteful retorts then, but with several eyes on us now, I only said, “We miss you.”

For a brief moment, sorrow flashed in his expression. But all he said was, “It’s too late for that now.”

I watched despondently as Daniel steered the woman towards the grand front doors, and with an apprehensive look over the shoulder from the woman, the two disappeared inside the building. I stared blankly as the doors shut behind them. Then I kneeled down, put my head into my hands, and wept, lamenting the irredeemable fate of a lost brother.
A Report on the Investigation of Young Internet Addiction in Hong Kong

5E Nerissa Moy

Introduction
Recently, many young people spend ample time on their mobile devices in their everyday life. More youngsters have been involved in 'phubbing' which means the habit of snubbing someone for the sake of using their mobile phones. This problem does not stand alone but is part of a wider context. Special attention should be given to this issue. This report will explore the reasons behind the problem and present the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Findings
The findings reveal the behavioural symptoms of a person who has a strong Internet addiction. To illustrate this point, we discovered that many youngsters were said to be glued to the screen, constantly seeking the feeling of euphoria by using the Internet compulsively and neglecting sports, outdoor activities, and so on. Some individuals were affected physically. For instance, they had strained vision and are vulnerable to back problems. Meanwhile, others were affected mentally by developing a fear of missing out, or even worse, developing nomophobia (No Mobile Phone Phobia).

The prevalence of this phenomenon can be attributed to several factors, among which is the fact that they were not accepted by the public and carried a huge burden on their shoulders in studies. These youngsters were seen to be anti-social in their groups and some even encountered bullying or being ridiculed by their peers, as their demeanour was unacceptable by the public. Since they had difficulty integrating in real life, they turned to the virtual world instead. Owing to the growing eagerness of escaping from reality, they chose to spend more time on the Internet. As a result, they created an avatar online to live a second life in the cyberspace.

Needless to say, most of these youngsters were students experiencing pressure in their studies as well. Therefore, they opted for gaming on the Internet. Not only did they feel joy, but they also considered playing games on the Internet to be an outlet for relieving stress. However, simultaneously, the more time they spent on their mobile phone, the less quality time they could spare to accompany their loved ones. These technological devices are in some sense, molded into a source of conflict and tension in their lives.

Conclusion and recommendations
Overall, based on the above findings, we can interpret that Internet addiction strongly interferes with youngsters’ daily routine since it absorbs too much of their time. They are trapped in a vicious cycle. As conflicts escalate, not only will their emotional satisfaction plummet and confidence collapse, but relationships may also be compromised. This chain of undesirable events set off by internet addiction will lead to irreparable damage to the relationship. It may lead to a point of no return.

Therefore, this report recommends some feasible solutions before the situation intensifies. For a start, it would be advisable to provide these youngsters with adequate counselling on social skills or set up peer support groups to foster healthy relationships. The key to a healthy and strong relationship is communication. With the help of a peer support group, youngsters will become more sociable and connect with friends more easily in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, it is imperative to instill a goal in these adolescents’ lives in order to help them establish hobbies in their real lives. This way, they can relieve the pressure they encounter in their studies in a healthier way.
Monologue of Nature
SE Kerwin Tong

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. There are over seven billions human beings, from the mysterious Orient to the sparkling Occident, but, what connects these lives on the globe? Hearing the above, perhaps most of you will pop up with the term ‘global citizens’ in your mind. However, today, I’m going to introduce to you all to a much more elemental view. Not only are we global citizens, we are also the youthful seedlings of the nature.

Every day, we acquire our daily necessities from nature. Yet, have you ever heard the soft whisper of it? Nature has a volatile characteristic. Evolution of nature has been processing since time began, which signifies the adaptive features of nature. The ever-changing environment catalyses the versatile interaction among species. Indeed, nature is a mutual language that we manage to detect and be stimulated by those seemingly trivial changes. In the past, we collectively witnessed the growing footprints of nature. No, not only are we witnesses to it, but also part of the event with paramount importance. From islands popping out of the ocean during earthquakes to glaciers carving icebergs every hour, nature has been undergoing dramatic changes right before our eyes. These abrupt geographical transformations have been flabbergasting scientists and adding sparks to our hearts, maybe fear, or maybe admiration. For example, earthquakes do more than rattle the world. They also radically alter the landscape. Because of this, the original intact crust has cracked into continents, which changes our manners and patterns of congregation and settlement. After all, nature is a nexus, linking all of us, as if we are computers and nature is a CPU that we interpret and give proper responses to.

Then, it comes to the warning signals of nature. In these modern times, we have accomplished technological advancement at an exponential rate. In doing so, we permissively sanction industrial waste emitted from factories. Since the first air-conditioner made its debut, our conservation awareness has been declining. Behind the cool breeze, greenhouse gases have evolved that trap heat in our atmosphere and lead to the depletion of the ozone layer. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Fossil fuels, plastic products, industrial waste, and so on, are all the main culprits attributing to the corruption of nature, creating such as climate change and pollution. Think about it, humans have been devoting themselves to carving their names on the glorious pages of history books, yet, our dearest nature has become the utmost victim. Nature is endangered. Can’t you hear its gasps, its painful mourn?

Recently, the climate has become unpredictable and is intensifying. The weather frequently fluctuates from sudden tranquillity to sudden turbulence. Global warming, derived from climate change, is a heated debate nowadays. Seemingly, we all perceive this ominously. Shrinking of ice sheets, glacial retreat, and sea level rise are all the negative impacts of global warming. Consequently, mass extinction of endangered species could be prognosticated. Our lovely polar bears may vanish forever. Therefore, if we hear the imploration of nature, why don’t we take actions to rectify the situation?

We cannot turn the clock back. After all, how do you value nature? Would it just be a medium of living, or is it a tie that connects us all? We are living under the same sky, with nature being our common language. Its monologue is so potent that it deserves our attention. Would you rather slow down the pace of economic development in exchange for the benefit of nature, or would you rather satisfy your instant gratification? Yes, it is a hard decision to make in these competitive times. But, being not only a representative of Hong Kong, but also a child of nature, I believe these actions are worth taking. Together, the Garden of Eden can be restored. Thank you.
I was born a singleton girl. My friends and I were almost like siblings. I loved them as much as they do on me. I was born a blissful singleton girl.

It was a breezy night, beams of moonlight illuminating Victoria Harbour leaked through flocculent silvery clouds. The “world premiere” of my first, first-ever ballet show debut at the HKCC Grand Theatre. It had always been my dream to be on that stage, get dressed up like a doll and spin on that finely polished wooden floor in my pointe shoes. The tune playing above from the stereo enveloping my body was glorious, but not as deafening as the applause from the audience.

“Those cheers and whistles - why on Earth am I worthy of such support? The audience is amazing.” I was in disbelief what I had got through was real. My best friends in the dancing company and I strolled along the waterfront promenade, hand in hand, with the upsurge of the influx of adrenaline still in abundant supply. I could feel the stream of blood flowing through all of us. It was like hallucinating, or floating, or... inebriated? That surge of jubilation was inexplicable. Everything was unrealistic. The cicada buzzing on sparse trees was tranquil. I gazed into the void wondering, this is the best bond I can ever ask for.

We refused to let that “tonight” slip through our fingers and decided to go to a café so as to extend it. None of us noticed a matte black sports car propelling from the Peninsula Hotel, straight towards us.

“Woah, watch out!” The tires screeched and the vehicle braked right in front of us, leaving us bamboozled. A man exited the car – more specifically, my elder brother, Joe.

“Sissie, I miss you so much!” he mumbled out loud. He’s petite and faintly overweight, which “complimented” his universal face – those round eyes wide apart, flat nose ridge, mouth always grinning but never contained the protruding tongue – he had a genetic defect and suffered from Down’s Syndrome.

Growing up, he never quite satisfied the expectation of a caring brother who would heroically stand up for me whenever I got mistreated; instead, I got bullied for being a sister of a weirdo. I had a wretched kindergarten life, thanks to him. We soon moved to another district, hence primary school was a new kick-off for me.

“My name is Chris. I like...” On the first day of school, I introduced myself like every other normal kid. “...I am a single child at home.”

I had learnt through my experiences. I was born a singleton girl, or at least I tried to be. I had built myself a flawless path, brick by brick, tile by tile. Now, he appeared all of a sudden and shoveled it, sabotaged it. My friends backed off, gawked at each other and gave me a brisk glance. My life is over, I thought. I inhaled acutely, but what took over anger was scepticism.

Short after graduation, I roamed overseas to Moscow to pursue my ambition, studying at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy. It was cruelly demanding, undoubtedly, but hard work paid off, I joined the Hong Kong Ballet Company after graduation. Meanwhile, Joe was no less endeavouring than I was.
Last time I saw Joe, he had just graduated from high school and started investing on his career being a full-time NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). He had always been a disgrace to our family. How could he afford such a ludicrously extravagant sports car now?

“Joe, how did you...” He interrupted me by sticking a piece of card into my palm. It says...

_Sissie, you’re the best dancer in the universe! Proud of you, as always._

Sudden flashbacks came into my glimpse. Back in secondary school, I tore my hamstring due to rigorous stretching. For more than a season, I couldn’t walk without feeling a razor-sharp blade running along my thighs. I was engulfed in excruciating pain, enshrouded by bleakness. I kept pondering what would happen if I never recovered. But Joe was always there, supporting me, heartening me with limitless positivity. “Sissie, you will be fine, trust me!” And I did, I recuperated, but it seemed like I let slip of what Joe did for me.

“I became a psychiatrist and I earnt this machine on my own. Sissie, I am so proud of you, so I want to make you proud, too.”

The core of my consciousness wobbled out of guilt. It was Joe who screamed to cheer for me during the curtain call of our show, sitting in the very first rows.

“You’re going either with us or with him,” they grunted impatiently, “There are too many of us already.”

He wasn’t keen-witted, but he knew love better than any of us did.

“Have fun, guys. I’m going home with Joe.”

Joe, I am so proud to be your sister.
Beyond Words
5E Christine Wong

Guten Abend meine Damen und Herren – pardon me, what I just said was “good evening, ladies and gentlemen”, but in German. It is indisputably a diversified world we live in, constructed with innumerable cultures and languages which each and every one of us perceives like chalk and cheese – in very distinct ways. Since the genesis of civilisation, sheer walls of language barriers that are almost impossible to cross were built and we humans evolve to overcome them.

It was around 500 BC when the first ever translator in China appeared. According to “Liji”, one of the classics of Confucianism, he was to facilitate effective communication between the imperial court and northern clans so as to maintain stability of the dynasty and annex foreign tribes through negotiation. Henceforth, translators have been highly renowned and acclaimed for breaking the vexing impediment we humans have been suffering from. Or did they?

Though the world was seemingly highly integrated, back in 1945 during the white-hot stage of the World War II, a fatal translation failure of a rarely used word lead to the demolition of two cities in Japan and demises of over 200 thousand people with two dreadful atomic bombs.

Ladies and gentlemen, do you really think you can genuinely, thoroughly understand one another speaking another language?

Even if the same language is spoken, mutual apprehension is still not guaranteed. Taking Hong Kong as an example, being one of the top-notch expeditious metropolises, her rapid strides have pushed many to the edge of mental illnesses. Referring to the Hong Kong Mental Health Conference 2017, one out of six in Hong Kong has succumbed to the inordinate stress and is suffering from mental illnesses. Lamentably, the traditional method of therapy through verbal communication between patients and psychiatrists doesn’t always work out as patients tend to conceal themselves from being shattered again. What is the way out?

Whilst the global linguistic system has been ameliorating, it seems like we are entirely hinging on and struggling with words. We keep speaking futilely hoping to heal people, but ignoring the common language we all share – the nature.

Horticultural therapy utilises gardening as a means to cure mental illnesses. Different elements of the programme provide patients with different insights they internalise and liberate them out of their ailments. For instance, being involved in the circle of life of a plant amidst tranquillity in the environment can let participants reflect on life; self-love and confidence can be built witnessing how the plants blossom with exuberant vitality under their foster. To integrate more seamlessly into society, they learn to bear duties being responsible for sustenance of the plant. The Christian Family Service Centre launched a horticultural therapy programme with hundreds of depressed patients and a recovery rate of over 90% in three years. “It was really, really a godsend to me,” said Wright, a former depressed and alcoholic patient rehabilitated with horticultural therapy. Plants can’t speak, but unequivocally they convey more than words.

Dogs are dubbed men’s best friends. Feeling low, cuddles with our precious pets also brighten us up in a snap. Studies have proved that interaction and bonding with animals can stimulate the
production of endorphin and dopamine, the “happy chemicals”, in the human body, coupled with declination of blood pressure hence reduction of anxiety. Animal-assisted therapy calms people by recalling our elementary memory of safeness and soundness, thus has a surging popularity worldwide now. Kermit, an one-year-old grief therapy dog was sent from Texas to Florida earlier this year, to heal those melancholy parents of unfortunate victims in a school shooting incident with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, with the recovery rate exceeding the estimated average of 44% in the US. Not only dogs, almost any kind of tamed animals can be trained to be a therapy animal. Horses, for instance, have very sensitive backs that are sensitive to human movement due to emotional fluctuations and can co-operate very adroitly. Through building faith with horses, many autistic children are successfully cured. Animals don’t speak a word, but they remedy more than words do.

Ladies and gentlemen, the nature speaks beyond words. Thank you.
A Forgotten Dialect

5F Ivan Chan

Good evening judges, teachers and fellow representatives.

Since the dawn of the human race, we have been taking liberties with mother Earth’s opulent resources, we asked so much from nature, that we even worshipped it, for its holy power. Yet we seemed to have yielded to our bygone self, we still ask from nature itself, but its chance of expressing its opinion has been taken away, and we seem to have let our way of communication with the very system that nurtured us slip past our minds.

As humanity progressed, we seemed to have become ungrateful to our own creator, and worst of all, some even seemed to be backtracking. Go and watch any media outlets and you can easily find reports of international corporations employing cunning tactics to get around stringent regulation, such as the infamous Volkswagen Dieselgate which affected over 11 million vehicles worldwide and producing up to 40 times the regulated emission standards. Pepsi Co and Nestle, two prominent multi-national food and beverage companies have also been accused of illegal exhaustive deforestation in Sumatra, dismantling the diverse eco-system of the island. It seems as though people are willing to sacrifice the land we live on in exchange for proceeds, howbeit scrupulous laws have been put into place.

Or so we thought, as in recent times policy makers have not been exactly prioritizing the preservation of nature. Take the superpower of the United States of America as the prime example, senators and politicians have been using research published by oil tycoons to deny human activity in climate change, to the flat-out denial of climate change by the current president Donald John Trump, and consequently his blatant withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement for freedom in economic development. Scientists worldwide have long acknowledged the existence of global warming, and who that is affecting is unquestionable. Nonetheless, it is discouraging to see global leaders backslide in a time of mayhem.

What is it that we have to worry about exactly? After all, “if it is not broken don’t fix it,” right? Well, that is exactly the problem, for far too long we have been treating the Earth as a landfill, not realizing that one day it would be coming back at us. No longer is it that who or what should be the question on our minds, but how bad is it. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, otherwise known as the IPCC and a subsidiary of the United Nations, recently published the SR15 report in October, stating that a 2°C warming of the globe is inevitable by 2040 and will wreak havoc by tearing apart the ecosystem and swallowing island nations such as The Maldives. To limit the destruction, it is stated that a 1.5°C increase cap should be put into place, and we only have a limited window of 112 years to undertake changes in all aspects of life or it will all be too late. How revolutionary does it have to be? To start with, energy production has to be switched to renewable sources, greenhouse gas emissions decrease by a whopping 75%. Moreover, transportation on land or sea or in the air has to be completely stopped from using fossil fuels, followed by a barrage of further alteration. The world is in its direst state, and all of us will suffer from our own deed, but if we do not mitigate our risks anon, we as a species will be incapacitated when nature throws a punch back at us.
As exemplified by the above, we are very much doomed. Not so forlorn though, the situation may be desperate, but it is not yet impossible to right our wrongs. So, how can we change the odds in our favour? Being the largest carbon emitter, China is now one of the pioneers in renewable energy implementation with it accountable for over one quarter of total power generation for the entire nation, and still yet to rise. On the other hand, European cities are beginning to ban diesel vehicles with German cities such as Leipzig and Hamburg leading the charge, while across the English Channel the British parliament has passed a bill to prohibit all sales of new petrol and diesel cars by 2032. Famed aviation giant Airbus is also in the head of the game with their electric powered jet programme, featuring a fully-functioning prototype that is already undergoing real world trials. Government officials are also doing the best in their power to fulfill their obligatory errand of safeguarding our relationship with nature with 16 US states and Puerto Rico forming the United States Climate Alliance, accomplishing duties set by the Paris agreement despite higher-ranking officials’ best effort to prohibit them. People worldwide are now acting together for redemption, to reply back to nature’s moan and groan after centuries of neglect. It might not be enough, and we are still way off the target, but at least we are on course for peace.

Yes, it is true that we have dismissed nature’s distress signal. Yes, it is true that we are not doing nearly enough to be reconciled once again. Yes, it is true that we are on the verge of tipping over the scale. Yet it is still not all over, for we can go back on the end of the line. The journey will be a tough one, with unforeseen hurdles, but that doesn’t mean we should forfeit. For far too long we have not spoken to nature, or auscultate its heartbeat, so it is now our duty to establish this long-dissipated channel of communication with it, and once again talk with nature.
Our Nature
5F Mark Ng

Good evening, ladies and gentleman. With geographical separation and cultural differences among us, what is our common feature? Without a universal language, how can humans communicate with each other? I guess the answer is crystal clear - Nature. Nature provides us with raw materials for living, jaw-dropping scenery to admire and on top of all, a common platform for discussion and communication. We have an indispensable relationship and this is what makes nature so unique and supreme.

With only one and a half million species of plants and animals discovered at present, there are still innumerable species waiting to be discovered and classified. As the estimated number of species ranges from two million to fifty million, our understanding of nature can be said to be negligible. However, this little part of nature has already provided us with an enormous commutative platform across the globe. Every year, locals or tourists go to Mai Po Nature Reserve and the surrounding inner deep bay wetlands located in Hong Kong hoping to get a glimpse of the astounding migratory birds. There, everyone leaves their deep rooted discrepancies and conflicts behind, only carrying the truest heart looking forward to be amazed by the diversity and beauty of nature. With the aid of the four hundred species of birds, the forty crab species and the two hundred and fifty species of flowers, there is no requirement of a standardization of language. Locals from different districts and foreign tourists from various continents seem to build an unseen yet intimate emotional bond with each other. They share common appreciation and respect towards nature. The magical attraction of nature pulls people who are not destined to know each other together and provides them with an opportunity to meet.

Communicating with our ancestors and the past seems to be impossible, yet nature provides us a feasible means. The Dinosaur is probably the most well-known species that has become extinct from Earth. However, we are left with countless precious fossils lying underground. With these fossils, we are able to classify numerous dinosaurs such as Theropods, Abelisauridae and Sauropods. We can also roughly deduce the climatic conditions and environment conditions back in the past. Although the mystery behind its extinction has not been resolved, some say a massive comet hit Earth, while others say that there is an unimaginable volcanicism. Either way, the research conducted has been a real boost to scientists’ research on evolution and diversification of species. Nature saves us these cherishable treasures to let us communicate with the past, learn our evolution process and why we have become what we are today. Nature is also a common language between us and our ancestors. I am sure that everyone has heard of the Dodo bird but do any of you know how it became extinct? The major reason behind its extinction is due to dutch sailors. They ate the beasts as they were incredibly easy to catch and had no fear of humans. Their habitats were also irreversibly destroyed and invaded. Nature in this case serves as a sacrifice to allow us to understand what our ancestors had done wrong in the past and how we can prevent the repetition of similar scenarios. Therefore, 40% of Hong Kong lands are devoted as country parks and protected areas and a fishing ban is set up. But are we doing enough? The destiny of nature is in our hands. Seeing that there is an increasing amount of pollution everywhere and severe global warming, have we learnt from our ancestors or are we on the way of sacrificing nature again to set a negative example for our next generations?
Nature has been providing us with natural resources for living and entertainment. On the contrary, it did not spare us from troubling natural disasters. Although some countries are more prone to more serious natural disasters, there is not a region that is immune to them. Ranging from typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis to heat waves, to tornadoes and blizzards, every natural disaster can exert devastating destruction on a country and cause multitudinous casualties. Destructive earthquakes followed by tsunamis have caused 15 thousand deaths and over a million houses to be destroyed. Water and electricity supply are cut off and last but not least, earthquakes led to situations like the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. People have to be evacuated and nature is destroyed by the toxic nuclear radiations. The problem has not been thoroughly solved seven years after the disaster. However, when we look on the positive side, natural disasters have brought people together and social cohesion has been enhanced. People regardless of nationality pray for the safety of the Japanese, donate money to charitable organizations. Governments send out rescue teams and cooperative teams to Japan in order to provide medical aid and daily necessities. After the disaster, the summits of the ASEAN and the UN focuses on the prevention and cure for natural disasters. Scientists from all over the world come together to advance their technology and try to tackle the problem in order to reduce injuries in future disasters. Natural disasters serve as our common language, enhancing cohesion, intimacy and cooperation between countries.

Nature serves as our common language, breaking the barrier of time and space. Nature is not just our tool or source of raw materials, it is also our common bridge. As pollution and global warming becomes increasingly serious, it’s time to take action and tackle this global issue to restore our beautiful nature. I hope we won’t be regretful when we look back in our lives.

Thank You.
Report on Investigation into Young Internet Addicts in Hong Kong
5F Kate Ng

Introduction
According to GSMA Intelligence, Planet Earth has hit a notable technological milestone, with two-thirds of the world’s population now, laying claim to a mobile phone connection. Phones have become the must-have item in this age. The problem is: can people utilise it in a suitable manner? One of the side effects is Internet addiction, also known as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Internet addiction sweeps across the world by storm, especially among young people. This report explains why the number of young addicts is rising and suggests what can be done to help these youths.

Discussion
If a person feels extremely nervous, depressed or the thought of being separated from the phone is just downright unthinkable, he or she may be suffering from Internet addiction. As bullying becomes more and more regular these days, youths can easily lose their sense of recognition. Thus, young people like going online to create a life simulator in order to live a second life. Youths may also like seeking instant gratification from gaming. Thanks to that, they cannot live without the Internet. This can also be attributed to their yearning for escaping reality. Political disillusion, stress from studies and work can wear people out, so going online provides an outlet for stress.

Conclusion
Overall, based on the discussion above, we can holistically deal with the problem in three ways. Firstly, the government should allocate money to providing counselling services and campaigns to help young Internet addicts. Secondly, schools should instill in teenagers a meaning in their lives and help them to pursue their dreams. They should also organize seminars to raise students’ awareness of the possible danger of Internet addiction. This enables students to be more mindful of the issue. As for parents, they play a pivotal role in providing guidance and the monitoring of their kids. They should restrict children’s screen time by setting time limit on their devices.
An Unforgiven Betrayal
5F Rodman Poon

“This is the best of times; this is the worst of times.” Gently closed the book I was reading, I whispered to myself, “I wonder how you will comment on the situation here, Mr. Dickens.”

That year was 1942, one year after the surrender of the Governor of Hong Kong, right at the Peninsula Hotel where I was sipping a cup of coffee and enjoying some literature. The Japanese military took control of Hong Kong promptly after that fateful Christmas in 1941, and required all citizens to face the brutal and relentless governance of the Japanese. Owing to the irrational policies and extreme ferocity of the Japanese soldiers, citizens were living with immense fear and suffering, with their blood - no matter literally or metaphorically - flowing all on the streets and sewers.

I, who was working under the British colonial government, was given the task to monitor the situation in Hong Kong after the occupation of the Japanese, regardless of my identity being a Chinese. I was born in Nanking, where I experienced my childhood with my disobedient brother. While I was striving to make ends meet in my early years, he was still messing around, never trying to settle down with a decent occupation. After I had gained enough to travel to Hong Kong, aiming for a better life, I left Nanking.

On the platform in the station, I had my last conversation with my brother. “Get yourself a job, don’t wait to get fed. You need to bear responsibilities now,” I sighed to him.

“I am trying, brother! I promise, I will achieve what you can 15 years later. Just wait and see.”

That was it, our last encounter 15 years ago.

The aroma from my little porcelain cup drew me from the abysmal depth of my memory. “Time to work again,” I told myself, checking the time on my exquisite pocket watch crafted in France, finishing my coffee in a gulp, and paid the bill, slightly adjusted my tie while walking through the door. After a few steps on Salisbury Road, a peculiarly familiar face caught my attention. It was a young man driving in a sharp red sports car. Observing further, I notice he had a distinguished hairstyle, and was wearing a tidy black suit. He had the resemblance of my brother. I was astonished by what I had seen. My quivering hand could no longer hold my suitcase firmly.

“Hey you’ve dropped something,” someone yelled from behind. As the characteristic red car left, my soul felt like it was also being drawn away by the car.

I could not help thinking about what had happened in that morning. I had not met my brother for fifteen years and then he suddenly appeared in front of me. He had been a parasite on society since I last met him, but then he seemed to have become a successful man afterwards. As an elder brother, I had the responsibility to look after him, as well as knowing how he lived recently.

On the preceding morning, I walked by the same path hoping to see him again. Fortunately that red sports car passed by with the same swiftness on the same road, almost a playback from the previous day. Without considering he might be going to another district, I chose to follow him on foot without the slightest hesitation.
Lucky for me, he stopped a few blocks away from the hotel, so I could still breathe when he stepped out of his extravagant car. Once I saw his car was attempting to park beside the road, I made use of my last bit of agility, hiding behind a post box immediately. Just when I had finally managed to restore my breath, he had already entered a building. The last image I saw was the confident grin on his face. Carefully moving to the entrance of the building, I was judging if I should get inside or not as I had no clue where I could find my brother.

“Snap!” Someone slapped on my shoulder. As survival instinct, I leaped forward and turned my sight on the person slapping hand, with a hand touching the pistol hidden in my waist.

“It’s been a while, brother.” It turned out it was my brother slapping me; nonetheless, I could not hide the shock on my face.

“Come on, let’s get inside and we will talk.”

I agreed and followed my brother into the building. It was a multi-storeyed building at the first glance, but the more I roamed in the building, the more insecure I felt. All signs were written in Japanese. Meanwhile, all people I met spoke Japanese, neither Chinese nor English. Soon we ended up in a dimly lit office, with a table covered with piles of documents, and bookshelves surrounding the room.

“Wait, it can’t be true...” I trembled with terror, perhaps with a little agitation.

His confident grin showed up once more, “You’re right, I am an officer in the Japanese army in charge of Tsim Sha Tsui. This is our headquarters.”

Probably out of the intense astoundment brought by the fact that my Chinese brother was serving the Japanese, I froze on the tile I was standing. My sensibility came alive very soon after. I reprimanded vehemently.

“Now I know why you have become rich. Why would you betray us? You are Chinese!”

“Oh really? How about you? Slave dog of the Englishmen. Don’t forget Hong Kong was originally in the hands of China.”

His words pierced the very depth of my heart, simply a light beam casting away darkness. Yes, perhaps we were both working for the invaders of China, what was our difference then?

“The Japanese must be the last one standing, You know how the Allies are losing right? I can bring our people peace and comfortable living without the British after the war ends. Helping the Japanese is the only method to save our people, which is my responsibility!”

“Wait, you have mistaken something. Destruction and chaos were never solutions to peace. Those Japanese soldiers ravaged our land, robbing and slaughtering whenever they wanted in the
streets. You call this peace?” My fury grew further, which strengthened my crumbling defense of value, I shouted, “You’re wearing and draining the blood of our people!”

“You’re only living by your feelings, dear Marianne. Look at the world now! Death is the imminent destiny of Britain…”

“Bang!” I left his office, hearing enough of his nonsense. I knew that without him, things would still be identically pathetic, so I didn’t’ deal with him.

Gazing at the sky, I wondered when we, the Chinese, could truly be emancipated from our unwanted invaders. The reverberation was resounding.

“This is the best of times; this is the worst of times.”

You would still mutter the same sentence, right?
Book Review – Murder on the Orient Express
5F Ernest Wong

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Earnest Wong from 5F. Have you heard of the detective novel writer, Agatha Christie? Yes! She is also named the ‘Queen of Mystery’. Today, I am here to review her book: Murder on the Orient Express. I was deeply fascinated by the novel and would like to discuss the ingenious foreshadowing, twists and messages of the book below.

First of all, let me give you a brief account of the book. Murder on the Orient Express was first published in 1934. After its publication, it quickly became the best seller of the decade, and was critically acclaimed by readers and critics. Until now, it is still one of the most well-known detective novels in history. The story kicked off by the death of a man, called Ratchett, on a train, the Orient Express. No one admits to having killed him. Here comes the protagonist, Poirot, the Belgian detective who is invited to investigate the case by police officers. Initially, Poirot tries to single out one suspect from the 12 passengers on the train, but later, he discovered that all of them knew each other, including Ratchett, before they boarded the train. They conspired to kill Ratchett to avenge the death of an innocent little girl, named Daisy, and her parents.

Do you know a detective novel without good foreshadowing can hardly be a detective novel? I appreciate the foreshadowing Agatha Christie uses in this book. It is meticulously-planned, carefully written and obvious enough to raise readers’ attention towards some crucial, yet seemingly minute, details. In the book, when Poirot was investigating the murder, he found a handkerchief with an ‘H’ sewed on it and some cigarettes in Ratchett’s compartment. It foreshadows that the murderer’s name may contain an ‘H’, and he or she may be a smoker. Since nobody fits the profile, it suggested that there may be more than one person involved in the case.

Besides good foreshadowing, do you know what else is important in a detective novel? Right! It’s to have good twists. Actually, I am quite surprised by the twists used in the book as they are quite unconventional. Usually, in a detective novel, readers are guided to empathize with the murdered victim and are invited to solve the case with the detective to put the murderers behind bars. However, in Murder of the Orient Express, the victim, Ratchett, was found to be a ruthless kidnapper who killed little Daisy after he was paid the ransom. The revelation of Ratchett’s true colours suprises readers and changed the direction of Poirot’s investigation.

Do you believe that great literature makes us better people? Here, I would like to discuss some of the messages from the book with you. First, I have learnt that we should not plot against others. No matter how seamless your plan appears to be, you will get caught, just like the twelve passengers who have conspired to kill Ratchett. Also, the book teaches me that the law has its own limitations. In the story, Ratchett was trialed in court for kidnapping and killing little Daisy, but he got acquitted because of some legal technicalities. Third, I have learnt that I should stay calm when being given some challenging tasks, like Poirot in the book. He was given a seemingly ‘unsolvable’ case on his way back to London, yet, he remained calm throughout the investigation and solved the case successfully in the end.

Lastly, I am here to tell you how the book has influenced me in different ways. First, it has changed my view in justice and empathy. Although legal justice seems very powerful and effective in punishing and deterring the villains from committing crimes again, there are still certain inadequacies
in laws, which can be compensated by human justice in some cases. For example, it’s illegal to kill Ratchett, but Poirot empathized with the twelve passengers for bringing Ratchett to justice by giving him the punishment he deserves. Second, I have learnt that revenge does not bring closure, but more pain. As the saying goes, ‘An eye for an eye, everybody will become blind.’ Killing Ratchet doesn’t make the twelve passengers felt relieved. They will be blamed by their conscience for the rest of their life, watching over their shoulders constantly in fear of someone taking revenge for Ratchett. Although, I agree with what Poirot did at the end of the book, by looking the other way and letting the twelve passengers go free, this isn’t acceptable in modern-day Hong Kong. The rule of law is one of our core values. We are trained to adhere strictly to the law, and all lawbreakers should be punished accordingly.

All in all, Murder of the Orient Express is entertaining, illuminating and complete. I had a perfectly gorgeous time reading this book. Besides its ingenious foreshadowing and twists, it has conveyed lots of meaningful messages to its readers. Do you want to read this book now? Don’t hesitate and get a copy from a bookstore nearby. Thank you!
The Ideal Curriculum for Hong Kong Students
6A Nikki Chan

The Hong Kong education system has long been criticized for being exam-oriented and spoon-feeding students. Having to follow a tight schedule every day puts students in Hong Kong under immense pressure. According to a survey, over 80% of secondary school pupils are overwhelmed by stress brought on by academic performance. Some people have been calling for a change to the Hong Kong education curriculum. It is believed that overhauling the education system can help reduce adolescents’ pressure. Here are some remedies which can rectify the current situation.

Shortening school hours is one of the ways to make the current situation better. As parents nowadays want to boost their kids’ academic results and keep them competitive, students are often asked to join numerous extra-curricular activities and tutorial classes. After spending eight hours at school and two to three hours at tutorial centres, teenagers barely have time for rest, let alone entertainment. However, getting enough sleep and recreation every day is crucial to a kid’s physical and psychological development. By shortening school hours, children will not have to spend as much time on campus, and can, on the other hand, have some time to take a nap or play a few rounds of games. Rescuing pupils from a packed schedule can relieve their pressure. Reducing the time students have to spend on classwork and lessons is definitely a way out to the current plight.

Besides, a smaller class size is another shortcut to achieve an ideal curriculum. It is not uncommon to have one teacher teaching a class of forty pupils in Hong Kong. That a large class size will undermine teaching and learning efficiency is undeniable. To make matters worse, this teacher-centered teaching is not interactive and cannot cater for learners’ diversity. By trimming down the class size, teachers can take different students’ needs and differences into account. When individual need is satisfied, it can encourage teenagers to participate in class. The deep-rooted problem of spoon-feeding will no longer be criticized instead, be applauded for being student-centered and interactive. Motivation is of utmost importance when it comes to learning and small class size can undoubtedly help arouse that.

Promoting creative and critical thinking are the elixirs to curing this flawed system. The present system encourages students to pursue model answers. Creativity is therefore stiffened. Pupils would rather drill on past papers than express their creativity. To stir their curiosity and showcase their creativity, what we should do is to encourage students to ask questions and to challenge the status quo. Instead of exam-oriented focus and rote learning, critical thinking lessons should be introduced to enhance their logical thinking.

Undeniably, there are numerous flaws in the present Hong Kong education curriculum today. With the right amount of adjustments, it is not hard to turn it into an ideal curriculum. By shortening school hours, reducing class sizes and promoting critical and creative thinking can help with the situation before it gets out of hand. We should go to great lengths, if not any lengths, in order to pursue an ideal curriculum and address the roots of the problem, so that teenagers can have a better childhood and a brighter future.
E-books are better than print books
6B Jonathan Chu

Have you even seen students carrying huge and heavy school bags walking on the streets? Overweight school bags have long been an issue of concern. Could you imagine what will happen if you carry a 10 kg bag every day? It is not just inconvenient but also detrimental to students’ health. Therefore, I agree with those parents who are calling for the use of e-books to replace traditional prints books. Here are three reasons to support my view.

Firstly, e-books are much more convenient than traditional print books. Besides the main subjects, most students nowadays have to study lots of other subjects such as Physics and Economics. Some students even study more than seven subjects. They have to carry more than seven books every day, not to mention notebooks, homework, PE uniforms or other things for extra-curricular activities like musical instruments. It is tiring to carry so many things while walking on the busy street. If we use e-books to replace the traditional print books, students will only have to bring an electric device such as an iPad to school. It can reduce the weight of their bag and they can go to school more comfortably. What they need to do is just to buy a device and download the books they need for the lessons. Thus, they can go to school with a light bag.

Secondly, using e-books can reduce the use of paper and help save money. Nowadays, traditional print books are thick and colorful. The printing of books requires a significant amount of energy. Moreover, producing books need the cutting down of millions of trees to produce paper. However, most of the textbooks will only be used for a year and they will be thrown away when the academic year ends. Using second-hand books are not very common in prosperous places like Hong Kong. It is a great waste of paper. Using e-books could reduce waste and students can read the course materials on their own device. We can protect our environment through this action. We cut down millions of trees every year in order to make textbooks. It would be great if we can save these trees. Economically, using e-books can also save our money. With the advent of technology, buying an electronic device for long term use is not expensive at all. However, textbooks and workbooks today are extremely expensive. It costs a few hundred dollars for a book. The price of e-books is much cheaper and affordable. We can save a lot of money if we switch to e-books.

Thirdly, carrying heavy printbooks affects students’ growth. It is very common to see students carrying school bags that are not just heavy but often bigger in size than their body. Traditional print books are heavy, carrying them every day will definitely affect students’ growth. Many studies have already shown that carrying a heavy schoolbag has a range of adverse consequences on students as they grow into adulthood. Backache, muscle strain, lung problems and distortion of the spine’s natural curves are cases in point. In order to tackle this problem, one of the easiest ways is to replace traditional books with e-books. It is of paramount importance for us to protect student’s health.

Using e-books is an effective and feasible solution to solve the problem of overweight school bags. It could even save money and greatly reduce our consumption of natural resources. So why not considering using e-books now?
What If Nature Can Speak?
6C Angelica Chan

Have you ever heard the sound of nature? From sky to land, from wind to water, a myriad of elements make up nature, providing every species with precious resources, together with a livable environment. With the development of mankind’s wisdom, our ancestors started to utilize the gifts from nature by learning from animals, whose approach was to take the minimum from the environment to meet their basic needs such as food and shelter. Animals attain water from rain or build their homes with strong branches or in mountain caves. For human beings, in a bid to satisfy our basic needs, our ancestors foraged for food by hunting and gathering.

Being in a harmonious relationship with nature, human beings and other species were capable of understanding more profoundly the meaning of life, as well as the essence of treasuring nature. Given the fact that humans viewed other species as equals in the ancient era, nature tried its utmost to provide living beings with a lavish environment and useful skills to sustain their lives. It was the time when we respected nature and depended on nature, we were afraid of nature due to its mysterious power. It is widely acknowledged that we were to keep this congenial relationship with nature. We loved and depended on nature, and in return, nature took care of us and bred lives.

Such an optimal balance between humans and nature, however, has been upset. With the flow of time, the relationship has changed dramatically. Humans are gradually regarding ourselves as the rulers of the world, having a free hand on nature. With the development of advanced technology, we create ourselves comfortable lives at the expense of nature. For instance, plastic bags and bottles are produced in the name of convenience, which is the crux of the chronic plastic catastrophe. Given the fact that the least time needed to completely decompose a plastic bottle is 70 years, the undecomposed microplastic debris tends to contaminate the soil and taint the ocean ecosystem. The overconsumption of plastic products will not only bring irreversible adverse effects to the environment, but will also put other species, which should originally enjoy the same rights as human beings, in jeopardy. Take pandas as an example. Thousands of pandas lost their habitat due to humans’ behavior. The giant pandas, which were once widespread throughout southern and eastern China, now only appear in bamboo forests high in the mountains of western China. A million hectares of grassland was destroyed due to overgrazing. Where animals used to run free is now factory farms where animals are bred and slaughtered relentlessly for our satisfaction. Have you seen the photograph of dying polar bears lying on melting glacier? What I feel is a deep sense of helplessness. The behavior of human beings demonstrates that we now put ourselves in priority over nature. In comparison with humans, other species still take their minimum share from nature. What about humans? Can we hear the groan of agony from nature?

Being the culprits that have damaged nature, we humans bear the consequences like global warming and water pollution which threaten our lives. What we really need to do should never be taking control over nature but to stop our irresponsible and unsustainable behavior. We ought to try every endeavor to co-exist with nature in harmony, just like other species always do. As Margaret Mead once said, ‘We will not have the society if we destroy the nature’. Human beings are supposed to fear and respect nature and appreciate other species as much as we love ourselves. Thank you!
A Challenge for All  
6C Angelica Chen

Good afternoon fellow students. I am the Student Ambassador of a youth environmental concern group. It is my privilege to be invited to this assembly to talk about a simple and sustainable lifestyle. Have you read the news about the plastic waste produced nearly 20 years ago being washed ashore when typhoon Mangkhut hit Hong Kong? The luxurious lifestyle people are chasing nowadays is causing our environment to deteriorate at the same time. For the sake of protecting our environment, it is high time we adopted a simple and sustainable lifestyle.

Have you ever tried a buy-nothing day or taken a 10-day zero waste challenge? Living in a consumer-oriented society, youngsters are unconsciously indoctrinated to accept a hedonistic culture making impulsive shopping decisions. Take myself as an example, I sometimes decide to buy items such as T-shirts or bags at first glance even though I already have similar ones in my wardrobe, leading to a waste of resources and money. It is the insatiable desire for materialistic possessions that culminates in my irresponsible shopping behavior and overconsumption. Given the fact that the tendency of overconsumption is becoming more and more prevalent, the battle of reducing waste seems to become a tall order. However, every endeavor we make will count. As the saying goes, ‘Many a little makes a mickle’. The reason why we should take the pledge to lead a simple life is to maintain a balance for the planet that breeds and nourishes lives.

Among the multitude of methods to lead a simple and sustainable lifestyle, recycling and upcycling are regarded effective ones. Thanks to recycling, coupled with upcycling, items destined for the dumps are rescued and repurposed into something useful. According to the statistics from the WHO, the reduction of the emission of carbon dioxide reached 20 tonnes last year due to the development of recycling, which has helped to alleviate the pressing threat of global warming. We are capable of giving a second life to useless items like changing old T-shirts into cat tents or transforming old books into a lamp. Upcycling cannot only help humans to quit conspicuous expenditure, but also save resources by slowing down resource exploitation. What’s more, upcycling is also a means to stop hoarding, which in turn empowers us to enjoy more physical space and freedom. We may feel lighter, more at ease and more focused after getting rid of the unnecessary.

A simple and sustainable lifestyle benefits both individuals and the society. A simple lifestyle can remind us to attach less meaning to our possessions and instead, pay more attention to our health, our relationships with others and our desire to contribute beyond ourselves. For instance, the vicious work-life imbalance in the pursuit of wealth and material satisfaction will be upset with the reduction of obsession with materialistic possessions. For society, our environment will benefit and become more liveable day by day with less pollution. The emission of carbon dioxide will drop which will also benefit the eco-system and biodiversity. A simple lifestyle will bring countless benefits, for us and also for the whole world.

Better late than never. We youngsters are considered future pillars of the society. Picking up a simple and sustainable lifestyle starts with the individual and starts with us. I hereby urge you to take immediate actions, take the pledge to lead a simpler life and conserve our environment. Thank you.
Songs with Swearing in the Lyrics Should be Banned

6C Tania Tsang

Music is described as an international language which has been a common pastime of people from all ages. Different kinds of songs are widely spread all around the world, including songs with swearing words. This question has aroused intense controversy as it cannot be denied that songs containing foul language instill some detrimental messages to listeners. In my opinion, songs with profanities should definitely be banned.

Music has the power to change people, change the way they think and behave. Young children are easily affected by many external factors. They absorb nearly everything they see like a sponge without thinking whether the information is appropriate or not. If something influential and ubiquitous like music is allowed to include bad language, children may consider those swearing words as proper language and imitate it. Apparently, this is unfavourable to their growth. This would probably cultivate a bad habit of speaking with profanities.

Some may say that songs with swear words are always labelled with parental advisory so it is possible for parents to prevent their kids from listening to those songs. However, when the use of smartphones becoming prevalent nowadays, children at a young age normally own a device that can access the Internet by themselves such as an iPhone. Without a doubt, the Internet is a tremendous library with all kinds of resources. In this case, kids can easily find these songs on the Internet and listen to them without purchasing. Those age warning labels are ineffective as to stop them from listening to the songs.

I am greatly assured that as a person who produces products that are accessible by the general public should be alert to the messages spread in those products. They have the responsibility to share positive messages, at least not insulting words. I respect the composers’ freedom in creating and their need to express their negative emotions through songs, but it should not be a reason to put humiliating words in songs and make public. Imagine if everyone is able to spread profanities in the name of freedom, society would be in a mess where children cannot be educated properly and people can insult each other freely.

Freedom is not an excuse to spread messages of hatred and humiliation. Instead it is the important to create a society with love and respect. We should go to great lengths to protect our new generation as not all of them are mature enough to tell right from wrong.
Should Physical Education be Compulsory in Schools?
6C Jocelyn Wong

Dear Editor,

There has been a heated debate on whether schools should make Physical Education (PE) an elective subject as some of the S6 students are complaining that PE lessons are taking up their time of revision and doing homework. I would like to voice my thoughts that PE is crucial to every student and should stay as a compulsory subject in schools.

Needless to say, staying healthy and energetic is an important component of keeping students optimistic in their HKDSE life. Having PE lessons can definitely ameliorate the quality of their physical and mental health. In the aspect of physical health, PE lessons provide chances for students to exercise their bodies for at least 2 hours a week. This can train their cardiorespiratory system and help them develop a healthier physique. Therefore, S6 students who are usually saddled with a tremendous amount of homework and numerous examinations can generate enough energy to cope with the vast workload. As for mental health, scientists have proven that endorphin will be produced inside human body while doing exercise. Endorphin is a chemical that reduces pain and can make you feel happier. This means after doing exercise, you will feel happier and probably more energetic. Due to this effect, students can release their stress during PE lessons. They will be filled with vitality and have an optimistic mindset.

On top of that, PE lessons can help students develop a team spirit. Due to the competitive learning environment, teenagers nowadays attach too much importance to their academic performance. Many of them refuse to join any extracurricular activities. As a result, they do not know how to work effectively with others. The magazine, ‘Time’, has even described them as narcissists. Yet, PE lessons can change this phenomenon. As students are usually asked to play team sports such as volleyball, basketball or badminton during PE lessons, they can learn how to collaborate with their team members. Besides, they need to communicate and cooperate well in order to win the competition. Therefore, students can learn the importance of team spirit. This helps them to develop good team cooperation and spirit, which are critical success factors when they step into the society to pursue their careers after university education.

Last but not least, students’ concentration can be improved by attending PE lessons. Many of the S6 students complain that they cannot focus on their studies and lessons as they are experiencing too much stress. However, studies have proven that physical exercise helps improve people’s concentration, memory and thinking because a fitter body will supply a rich amount of oxygen to the human brain. As you can see, PE lessons can help students to improve their attention and memory which can benefit their studies.

PE lessons are by no means worthless for S6 students. Exercise can help them maintain a healthy body and boost their working efficiency, which is also beneficial to their academic achievement. It is sincerely hoped that the school will not make PE an elective subject and students can enjoy their PE lessons.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
Student’s Learning Efficiency
6D Alex Chow

Dear Editor,

Some critics point their fingers at the current early attendance time claiming that it is deteriorating students’ learning efficiency by draining their energy. It is, beyond doubt, extremely exhausting to attend classes and accomplish schoolwork, yet an early school starting time is obviously one of the contributing factors.

In a bygone era, students were passionate about acquiring new knowledge but now the classroom is infused with moaning and yawning. Such ‘stunning’ scenes have depicted the truth that students are worn out for different reasons. Grueling schedules, hectic pace of life and countless schoolwork, have inevitably exerted immense tiredness on students while they are subjected to squeezing themselves in order to live up to teachers’ expectations, parents’ ambition and personal requirements. In an attempt to attach a satisfying transcript, they participate in numerous tutorial classes to sharpen their skills, be them language skills or numeric skills. It’s beyond imagination how tired an assiduous pupil can be, dashing to tutorial schools after an eight-hour lecture and burning midnight oil after wearing out from supplementary classes. It is clear that such hectic lifestyles are definitely the crux of students’ tiredness.

In line with cramped schedules, lack of time management is also one of the attributing factors leading to students’ tiredness. Gone are the days when students were arduous all day long. Thanks to the advent of advanced technology, it’s omnipresent to see students in this day and age holding a portable, handy device in their hands, concentrating on their soap operas, online games or chatting with friends. Little difficulty is there to imagine how students manage their time with deplorable self-discipline, erroneously allocate their schedules, placing phubbing and procrastinating as their first priority instead of studying or seeking knowledge. In view of this, students are compelled to burn their midnight oil to finish their remaining homework which they left behind because of squandering their precious time. It’s blatantly clear that the crux of the tiredness, is their poor attitude and lack of discipline.

Some said, postponing attendance time from 8:00am to 9:00am can alleviate the worsening phenomenon. True, sleeping hours of students can be lengthened, but the policy can only do little difference because it isn’t the appropriate means to redress the issue at its root. The main problem is that students put too much emphasis on academic results and neglect the importance of rest and relaxation. The proposal is in name a step forward in polishing students’ learning efficiency, but in fact a step backward in persuading students to tolerate slothfulness. It is undoubtedly that such suggestion is an imprudent and immature act to tackle the problem superficially but not its root. The proposal is deemed to end up in vain as the root problem is not being eradicated.

To call a spade a spade, the appalling and aggravating phenomenon has manifested an unpredictable and unforeseeable future for Hong Kong’s education system. It’s practical to inculcate the correct value and attitude rather evade the issue so as to save the plunging era.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Wong
End of Heavy Schoolbags?
6D Jasper Chung

Overweight school bags has received much attention for some time. It is evident that heavy schoolbags can adversely affect students’ health development. Some parents are calling for the use of e-books. This is definitely a feasible solution to the problem as electronic devices are more and more accessible. They have become essential items in our daily lives.

Traditional print books lead to two major problems. First, it is indisputable that carrying too many print books can damage students’ physical health. Some serious problems might be shoulder and neck pain, incorrect posture and damage to the spine due to overweight schoolbags. Second, producing print books causes disastrous environmental impacts. Printing a book requires a large consumption of trees. If we can replace the traditional print books with e-books, we can save innumerable amount of trees, reduce paper consumption and even save energy used in the production of book. Thus, using e-books can reduce the drawbacks of using traditional print books.

What’s more, e-books can provide a good learning experience for students. E-books are way more flexible than traditional books. They allow thousands of textbooks from different academic subjects to be stored in one device, thus ensuring portability and ease of transport. Besides, they do not have a fix font size. Students who have trouble reading can simply enlarge the size of the words or pictures to make reading more pleasurable. Additionally, e-books allow students to have a more enriching and interactive experience than reading traditional print books. They possess sounds, animations and even communication systems for teachers and students to use during lessons. They also provide a platform for students to get information easily. For example, students can search information online and download useful materials anytime and anywhere. Using e-books can certainly enhance the learning experience of students.

Although some people may be against the use of e-books in schools because e-book readers are quite expensive. Many studies have shown that in the long run, e-books cost significantly less than print books. Moreover, schools which promote the use of e-books provide programs for students to buy e-book devices at a cheaper price. Students can even borrow e-book devices from school when they need to use them in class or at home. So the cost of e-book readers is not a concern for parents.

Using e-books have become a general trend. Being a well-known international city, Hong Kong should keep up with the world as E-books have become a common education tool in many developed countries. They bring a lot of benefits to learning, but most importantly, they help solve the problem of overweight school bags. Nothing is more important than the well-being and health of our children.
Advertisement Should Be Exaggerated
6D Martha Tam

Good morning respected adjudicators, honorable opponents and members of the audience. Today’s motion is that “Advertisements should be exaggerated.” The use of advertisement is to boost revenue and arouse potential customers’ interest. To say that advertisements can make products more memorable and gain an edge over rivals is undoubtedly true. Yet, exaggerated advertisements mislead customers and put a company’s reputation in jeopardy. Therefore, we strongly believe the motion today should not stand.

The fact that exaggerated advertisements overpromise customers is crystal clear. It comes as no surprise that in order to generate hype, some companies amplify the benefits to appeal their products to customers. To be frank, an audience may not be able to make informed choices or cannot differentiate between reality and the life portrayed in the world of advertising. The innocent public is therefore deceived by these misleading advertisements and may experience a severe blow both physically and psychologically. One example would be exaggerating the effect of some medicines can put people’s health at stake. This can be a nightmare to our society if companies simply amplify how good their products are. It may be true that exaggerated advertisements are more likely to create vivid memories and can easily lure potential customers to consume their goods. However, of greater importance is integrity. The importance of bearing corporate social responsibility is beyond doubt. Therefore, exaggerated advertisements should indeed be held in check.

Needless to say, overpromised advertisements inculcate distorted and twisted value into the public. Loan adverts encourage spending ‘future money’, claiming that all your troubles will go away and your dreams will come true. Some immature customers may trust them and run up debts. The public is blinded by the belief that the benefits seen on advertisements are true, impulsive and conspicuous consumption therefore arise. The fact is that in the short run, those false claims can boost the company’s revenue, but in the long run, people lose faith in not only their products but also the company. In other words, is it worthwhile? I doubt it.

No one can deny that if companies keep amplifying their advertisements with unreal information, the credibility of the product or even the company can be undermined, somehow, some way, someday. I guess everyone here has watched the advertisements of McDonald’s, which feature scrumptious burgers with thick slices of beef, juicy lettuce and mouth-watering cheese. Nevertheless, the truth is, the burgers in reality are not as perfect as they seem in the adverts. Research had proven that fast food companies, like McDonald’s, offering junk food is the culprit behind the global obesity epidemic. As we can see, despite being the catalyst to boost sales and revenue, exaggerated advertisements are a turndown on a company’s reputation.

After weighing all the advantages and disadvantages, I am afraid our worthy opponents have overgeneralized the benefits of exaggerated advertisements. When it comes to revenue and integrity, honesty is always the best policy. Exaggerated advertising are never the only way out. To be frank, it can be a mixed bag. Is it worthwhile to boost revenue at the expense of goodwill? Our worthy opponents should take this question into consideration. With the disadvantages of exaggerated advertisements, our team strongly believe that the motion today should not stand! Thank you!
The Ideal Curriculum
6D Sonia Yung

The curriculum nowadays has been nothing but a downright failure. Teachers judge students’ ability solely on academic results. Students are enduring heavy workloads. The style of spoon-feeding learning has twisted the value of learning. The exam-oriented system is definitely the culprit behind this thorny issue. Does an ideal curriculum exist? What can we do to rectify the current curriculum?

As far as I am concerned, elitism is one of the main problems. Under the exam-oriented system, schools focus on students’ academic results, and because of that, students are separated into different classes according to their performances in exams. Schools always put the best teacher and most of the resources in the elite classes in order to sharpen their competitive edge when facing DSE. They focus only on helping the elite students to enter those top-notch schools. But what schools fail to take into account is the average students. School should allocate their resources fairly to every student. On top of that, schools should also reduce the large class size in order to cater for learner diversity. To conclude, schools should stop just focusing on the elites and start catering for every student’s needs.

Besides allocating too much resources to the elites, tightly packed after-school schedule and activities are also the crux of the matter. Nowadays, playing the piano is neither a talent nor an interest, but a pre-requisite to enter the top banding schools. Students, under the current curriculum, are required to do sports and learn an instrument, these activities put tremendous pressure on them. Being forced to attend piano classes or football trainings after school, they do them not for the sake of health or nurturing an interest, but to gain a competitive edge over their peers under this cut-throat system. This has totally twisted the value and meaning of extra-curricular activities. Whether the government should abolish the twisted “Whole Person Development” program is still up in the air. To me, students should be given the right to choose whatever they are passionate about doing and to develop their own interest in any aspect they want. So, in the long run, rectifying the program cannot only explore and fulfill students’ potential, but also lighten the pressure imposed on them.

Other than twisted rationales behind extra-curricular activities, an early school start and long school hours are also issues of concern. Over 80% of teenagers claim that they suffer from sleep deprivation. It is undeniable that having sufficient sleeping hours is essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Delaying school’s starting time can be a way out. While some critics argue that doing so will delay the school’s schedule and will be too late to end school at 5 or 6pm, in the view of students’ health, postponing the school’s starting hours is a necessary evil. It comes as no surprise that students spend almost 8 hours a day at school. To make matter worse, packed after-school schedule exacerbates the problem. A late school start can definitely help students lead a healthier life by giving them more rest time. It is of utmost importance to have an eight-hour sleep every night. A late school start is a big step forward towards an ideal curriculum.

When it comes to an imperfect curriculum, an early school starting time, elitism and cramped after-school activities are the culprits. At first glance, it may seem an uphill battle to overhaul the exam-oriented system, but it is everybody’s business to help our next generation to achieve an ideal curriculum. I believe that if we stop turning a blind eye to these issues and start joining hands to solve the problems together, the ideal curriculum is just a stone’s throw away.
Is Our Future Bleak or Bright?
6E Agnes Chan

“Hong Kong’s property prices have again topped the poll among Asian countries.” With a population of 7 million squeezing into such an olive-sized area, reports like this are prevailing nowadays. Everyone will unanimously reach a consensus that owning a property has always been one of the vaguest extravagant hopes for Hong Kong citizens. People from all walks of life often have to go to great lengths just to have a shelter in Hong Kong. Yet, why aren’t we teenagers interested in the intrinsic factors explaining the aforementioned phenomenon?

Dwindling complacency towards property prices is an affront to basic human rights regarding the ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ by Maslow, a psychologist. Biological and physiological needs, such as having a shelter, is apparently include as the fundamental needs of humans. Hence it attests to the fact that owning a flat is a critically indispensable element in one’s life. Despite the hypothesis, citizens are inclined to purchase a flat due largely to one’s sense of security. Being susceptible to conformity, people tend to follow the conventional mindset, conceiving ‘owning a flat’ is a wealth symbol. Traditional Chinese values pursue that the symbol honorably manifests a high socio-economic status and therefore would be prestigiously respected by all. We have to leave behind the thought in retrospect and perceive that people no longer uphold thrift and have a tendency towards materialism and conspicuous consumption now. The consumption pattern over again explains the overheated property market and how desperate we are towards owning a property.

While critics barbarously point their fingers at the government and impose tremendous criticism with accusations on housing issues, why don’t we pull back the veil and reveal the actual difficulties for citizens to own a flat? Thanks to the constantly swelling down payment implemented by the government, property prices have always been threatening, figures show that since 2003, home prices in Hong Kong have soared 430 percent, making the city the most expensive place in the world to buy a home among 406 urban centres. Such a high threshold blocks our way towards owning an elementary flat, let alone a luxurious one. Resisting property hegemony and doing away with the stamp duty levy, better said than done, has become banalities among society. This, lamentably, indicates a bleak future for our new generation. Housing supply has a trend towards falling prey to our demand in the near future.

Sarcastically, even if you are providentially privileged enough to own a flat, quality living conditions are not guaranteed. Prevalence of windshield buildings, sub-divided flats and shoe box units makes us densely packed with our neighbours. This cramped environment, pathetically causes the infringement of privacy. Humans with the basic sense of self-respect would deem that privacy is of utmost importance among the long list of wills. Patently, we wouldn’t want others to eavesdrop or peep on us! Therefore, we can summarize that overcrowding is found guilty of damaging citizens’ quality of life in the personal perspective.

Let’s then imagine what life would be like without having to own a property. It would be so hypocritical of me if I’m here to deceive you that owning a property is unnecessary. In spite of putting our safety in jeopardy, comfort is also unsatisfactory beyond belief. If the rule of law and justice are the foundation for a harmonious society in Hong Kong, then equally, having a tolerable shelter is the bedrock of one’s life. When you have a flat, you can make a headway towards a blessed life, but nobody can tell the velocity of your locomotion. Yes, if you have a flat, you can definitely savour a glimpse of affluence, yet a panoramic view of a prosperous life could never be within your reach. Immediate superficial enjoyment may seem fascinating at the first place, however, we should not rest on our laurels, referring back to the hierarchy of needs, self-actualisation is there to be attained.

Youngsters, treasure your own youth, pursue a flat or two for a fruitful future. The once-in-a-lifetime experience is enclosed in your hands. To fully utilize it or not, it solely depends on you.
Good morning honourable adjudicators, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentleman. Our worthy opponent mentioned that ‘Advertisement should be exaggerated.’ There is no denying that exaggerated advertisement is a catalyst to boost sales. However, it is disappointing that our opponent has overlooked the fact that exaggerated advertisement does more harm than good in the long run. With our three forceful arguments, the motion today should not stand.

Exaggerated advertisements overpromise customers. Customers have high and unrealistic expectations of products due to the effect of advertising. However, as soon as they realize the tremendous discrepancy between the promised and reality, they will feel deceived and no longer trust the product, let alone the company. In view of what has been mentioned above, exaggerated advertisement is good for nothing, if not putting the company reputation in jeopardy. Take skincare products as an example, these multi-function products may seem appealing to customers at first sight as advertisements gives a good first impression. They expect the product to be whitening, detoxifying, firming and anti-acne. Yet, when they realize that it is totally not the case, they may feel betrayed and deceived, and persuade their friends to take their business elsewhere. It is conceivable that the company will lose customers in the long run. To sum up, with long-term benefits in mind, exaggerated advertising is the last measure to take for boosting sales.

Besides, honesty is the best policy! Honesty is the social responsibility that every single corporate should bear. It is immoral to deceive the innocent public for the company’s own benefit. As a fundamental stakeholder in this society, if corporate culture constantly overlooks the importance of integrity, the social conduct will be degraded. Appealed by the temporary effect of boosting sales, other companies follow suit to make exaggerated advertisements. For a fair and harmonious society, the distorted and twisted value of dishonesty should not be tolerated. Although it is true that companies need promotion to get themselves into the public limelight, they should bear in mind that the increase in their revenue should not be achieved at the expense of good company ethics.

What’s more, some corporations put too much emphasis on advertising and promotion, while overlooking the importance of the quality of the product. It is putting the cart before the horse. The instant effects of exaggerated advertising may give some corporations a delusion that promotion is more vital than the product itself. More resources are poured into advertising while neglecting the importance of maintaining and refining the quality of their goods. It shows the myopic attitude of the company. Lacking motivation and incentive to upgrade and ameliorate the product, their competitiveness will eventually decline.

To conclude, instead of allocating resources to exaggerated advertisement, enhancing the quality of the product is more significant in boosting the sales of the goods. Exaggerated advertisements do more harm than good not only to the reputation of the company but also to the mutual trust between companies and customers. With the three forceful mentioned arguments, we whole-heartedly believe today’s motion should not stand.
The View from the Top and the Deluded Halo

6E Priscilla Lam

Living in a society predominated by the mindset that owning a flat implies a bright future, purchasing a shelter seems to have become the one and only goal of every adolescent. Yet, only few will conceive other paths to a bright future. Maybe it is time to take our future in our own hands and recognise the pathways worthy of our blood, toil, tears and sweat.

Hong Kong has one of the most expensive housing markets in the world. With an ever-soaring property price, purchasing a shelter, even the shabbiest, smallest and most unbearable, all seem to have become the biggest challenge of HongKongers. Being able to sail through such a challenge somehow implies a stable and felicitous life. The bigger your flat is, the merrier you should be, at least in theory.

Sounds ridiculous, right? But look, this is exactly what most people are believing in - future equals property ownership. No doubt everything happens for a reason. In Hong Kong, a myriad of youngsters choose to pave their way to a utopia by wrestling to secure the down payment and the monthly mortgages, and more lamentably, doing so at the expense of their dreams. Giving up on what one believes can bring joy isn't something as easy as ABC, there must be a reason compelling enough to prompt such an unusual decision.

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a shelter is considered as one of the basic needs for human beings; as a player of the game called “Life”, people can choose either rent or purchase one to survive this game. Renting a livable place is expensive, but more expensive is the down payment of a tiny, shabby flat, which the cheapest will take at least three folds of the rent. In theory, the best option for an ordinary person would be to rent a flat. Surprisingly, however, the unusual thing was what most people choose, even though it means they need a considerable amount of down payment, and thereafter, the monthly instalments. The only justification is that Chinese players of the game are more conservative. The deep-rooted traditional Chinese mindset make them crave for the sense of security by nothing but home ownership, even the ownership is an incomplete one, with the rest owned by the bank until the entirety of debt is settled. Owning property, in other words, is perceived as having a stable and normal future which involves little or even zero risk.

But is that really true? Does owning a property, having half title of the property guarantee one a carefree and delightful life? Is it really a stable refuge for security? Maybe something is overlooked. Underneath the seemingly glorious halo of being a respectable property owner, only few notice the hardship of making ends meet every month. If the down payment is said to be an uphill battle people have to face, then the dragging of the bill for decades is even more unthinkable.

The future should be the choice that we make, and such decision should be made freely. A promising future should be the ability for one to pursue what one believes is worthwhile, and everyone is entitled to their opinion. It is all about recognising what one’s heart truly desires and fight for it with determination until the day when the dream comes true. If a person in the course of making such a decision was haunted by the social correctness of home ownership, his decision is apparently not a free one, and his future ceases to be his but to those whom for whoever he tried to please. He, with his right to make decision stripped, has no future at all.
Property ownership boils down to nothing but being a material possession. And to the majority of people, it is simply not the ultimate purpose of their lives. Instead, dreams and the purposes beyond money fulfill the spiritual hunger and thirst. It is the dreams and passion that guide us to seek the right pathway; and throughout the journey, it is our ambitions that guide us and motivates us when we are discouraged. It is our yearning for life purpose that leads us to a bright and beautiful future.

After all, it’s about making choices. Live like a monster, or die a good man. Cliché as it sounds, but as the great physicist, Isaac Newton, frequently said, ‘The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.’ Life is a journey of hiking, the journey upward is bound to be painful, but the view from the top will be worthy of every effort. And this is what a bright future should be.

May all the dreamers shower together with joy and felicity. Fingers crossed!
Dear Jess,

Thank you for your letter. From what you described, I can understand why you are frustrated and troubled by such a dilemma. Torn between two cultures and beliefs, I can imagine how overwhelmed and confounded you must be feeling right now. Indeed, disagreement over career decisions and arranged marriages has always been the main source of intergenerational conflict among traditional Indian families. But before we move on to the solutions, it is vital that we understand the situation from both perspectives first.

Making a career decision is considered a critical task in youth identity development, as teenagers seek to gain autonomy and separate from their parents. For adolescents, career decisions are considered to be a marker of self-concept and critical thinking, while for parents, it is considered a family, or even a clan matter. These distinctions drive the parents and children further apart, as parents prefer careers that yield prestige and financial security, as opposed to careers that emphasize personal interests and skills. Conflicts between two parties are bound to happen.

However, is that truly inevitable? Contrary to popular beliefs, fulfillment of parental ambition does not always equate to personal sacrifice. A balance could be achieved if you carefully distinguish your personal interest from career choice. To judge whether you should pursue a particular vocation, you may want to consider the following factors, including the career’s prospect, its income, stability and your own aptitude. Through these assessments, you may reevaluate yourself and decide which profession you really wish to embark on. Incorporating parental input with personal desires may help establish a middle ground for both you and your parents. Isn’t that a win-win situation?

As much as you wish to pursue your dream job, haven’t you ever dreamt about meeting your Prince Charming? The romance, the fluttering hearts and sweating palms... all that thrill and excitement awaits! During puberty, youngsters often view the opportunity to sow their oats and experience the rush of first love as a fundamental rite of passage into adulthood. It is a process that is born of free will and choice, and many believe it should be the sole privilege and right of the individual in seeking for a partner. No one can deny that when it comes to love, the heart rules it all. But when it comes to marriage, is love the only thing we should ponder?

As you already know, the practice of arranged marriage is a traditional ritual for Indians. Parents who favor arranged marriages believe that they are more experienced and objective than their children. They will be able to make better, less impulsive choices regarding a compatible, and often financially supportive mate than their children will. In a society where the family system is a strong agency of socialization and emphasizes family unity as opposed to individual goals, the clash between ‘romantic love’ and ‘conjugal love’ is deemed unavoidable. However, before you reject and resist your parents’ arrangement, what harm could a few dates do? Statistics have shown that arranged marriages end in divorce about 10 times less often than non-arranged marriages. Who knows? Maybe your arranged partner could just be your Mr. Right. Just give it a try! Even if it does not work out in the end, you could always tell your parents the truth. After all, they only want what is best for you. If you show them that he is not the one, I am sure that they will understand.
Running away from the problem only increases the distance from the solution, and hiding your true thoughts away from your parents will only trigger more and more conflicts as the misunderstanding accumulates. Both values may coexist in harmony only if we heavily underline the importance of mutual and genuine communication. With acceptance and appreciation, it is possible to live up to your parents’ expectations while living your own life. If you still have questions and worries, feel free to write again. Let me know if you need any help.

Love,
Agony Aunt
Slim Does Not Equal Beauty
6E Natalie Lo

Finding a young woman who is never worried about her weight is almost as impossible as finding a magic pill that melts fat overnight. Yet, many are blinded by their desire to ‘look good’ as they go to extreme and unreasonable lengths in an attempt to lose weight. In a recent talk - ‘Slim is Not Beautiful. Healthy is.’ - organized by the Department of Health, Dr. Mehmet Oz, a leading pediatrician, Miss Kari Skitka, a social worker and Miss Judith Woods, an ex-patient recovering from an eating disorder, shared their views on the issue and warned everyone, especially teenage girls, to look out for weight losing traps.

Is being thin really worth dying for? No, it surely isn’t. However, the number of anorexic patients has risen by 110 percent in the past three years, with more than 10,500 young people struggling with food and weight-related anxiety in the last financial year. And it doesn’t stop there. 63 diet-pill victims have been killed by their insatiable quest for better figures. After every death the victim’s family has spoken out, begging other young people to beware taking diet pills. Yet the temptation has evidently proved too difficult to resist. Despite such cautionary tales, demand for these pills continues.

If something sounds too good to be true, then it usually is. It’s a rule of thumb we live by. But for the young and the vulnerable, a quick fix can seem just that: an instant answer, a magic bullet. To those who are overweight and struggling with poor self-image, popping an illicit diet pill might appear like a miracle cure; but really it’s a magic bullet that can kill, a quick fix that turns out to be a death sentence. “People fall prey to such traps due to two misconceptions: The ‘slim is beautiful’ mentality and ‘lose weight fast by taking pills’ fallacy,” commented Dr. Oz. Indeed, manipulated by marketing ploys, the distorted value ‘slim is beautiful’, is deep rooted in the minds of many teenagers. Since women are continuously comparing and benchmarking themselves against air-brushed images, their ever present inner voice constantly reminds them they need to have a flatter stomach, more pert breasts, more shapely legs and flawless skin. But what is frightening is that how women think they look often bears no relation to reality. According to research done by the University of Hong Kong, the body mass index of 40% of “post-80s” women is lower than the warning level (18.5). With the thirst for the “ideal weight”, that is, ‘ten pounds less than whatever my current weight is’, some might even take diet pills, neglecting the side effects of it, which can include fever, dehydration, nausea, excessive sweating, hallucinations and rapid or irregular heartbeat. In combination, these can even lead to coma and death. So instead of losing weight, you might actually lose your life.

Another misconception observed by Dr. Oz is that people are often misled by exaggerated claims of weight loss products made by immoral companies. The weight loss industry is an industry fraught with misinformation. Under the incomprehensive coverage of the Undesirable Medical Advertisements Ordinance, false claims about potential results and benefits of products run rampant. “It is the government’s responsibility to strengthen the said laws and raise the public’s awareness towards the issue,” said Dr. Oz, “On the personal level, adolescents must develop critical thinking skills so as to distinguish the deceptive claims and persuasive techniques used in weight-loss advertising.

“Most weight loss advertisements have been finely tuned based on decades of trial and error to convince you to buy their products. They know what you want to hear, and how you want to hear it,” Miss Skitka agreed, “Using techniques such as the celebrity effect or sex appeal, they inculcate the
twisted value ‘slim is beautiful’ into youngsters’ mind.” Under the widespread dissemination of information brought by the media, you can’t escape the ads. They pop up on TV, on your Twitter feed, on your Facebook page: ‘100 percent natural’, ‘This miracle pill can burn fat fast’.

Being susceptible to peer recognition, coupled with the need to boost their self-esteem, teenagers easily fall prey to the ramifications of the thinness ideal. “We see this as a much-needed ‘reset’ for the society. As you can see, our billboards, TV programs and social media sites all create and reinforce the belief that thinness equates to beauty. And it is certainly unhealthy.” Miss Skitka urges the mass media to practice the code of ethics and bear the social responsibility, while inner beauty should be appreciated instead. “People come in all shapes and sizes and they are all beautiful. Embrace the way you look and stop trying to become someone you can never be. That’s the answer to true beauty.” “That’s very true, Miss Skitka. I thought I’d found the answer in a bottle of diet pills, but apparently I learned this the hard way.” Miss Woods confessed, “It was the worst decision I have ever made in my entire life, one that could actually end it.”

Three years ago, Miss Woods tried to lose weight by taking diet pills bought online. She did lose some weight on the pills, but it came at a price. “I felt a little manic,” she said, “dizzy, shaky and nauseated. But I thought I could handle it. I was willing to endure some negative side effects because I knew I wouldn’t be taking them forever. I was looking at it as a short-term solution.” After just two weeks, she decided that the symptoms weren’t worth it and stopped, but the eating disorder problem continued even today. The quest for ‘physical perfection’ knows no bounds, and the weight loss trend is as dangerous as it is bizarre. “The beauty standards are absolutely ridiculous. The ‘belly button challenge’, ‘A4 waist challenge’. It’s just insane. Society is sick.” She urges different parties, such as schools, the government and the media to practice their professionalism and help girls fight against the twisted social atmosphere. “As an ex-patient, I know it’s always easier said than done. But the decision is yours, either you go along with everyone else and lose yourself within, or you stand up and say no to conformity.”

The world is not a world of fairytales; it’s a world of greed and money grubbers. Gaining weight isn’t just about hunger, but portion size and emotions and unconscious eating in front of the television or standing by the fridge; losing weight and keeping it off is about will power and effort and a change of mindset and lifestyle. After all, what is the most important element in life? No one will deny that inner beauty is the bedrock of a harmonious society, yet physical beauty remains a high priority for human. Health and physical beauty are never mutually exclusive, only if we pursue physical attractiveness in a healthy way. With endurance and acceptance, little difficulty is there to conceive how beautiful our future world will be.
The Kryptonite to Youth’s Success
6E Ariizumi Rika

It has become almost insuperable to fathom a future for our youthful generation without the ever-troublesome worries of purchasing accommodation in Hong Kong. A flat seems, to most, essential to an illuminating future. Has it not been for the individual ownership of a flat being the aspirational status symbol of our society, would our future be under the manipulation of the property market?

It lies in a single undeniable fact that a cozy accommodation is a basic need to be fulfilled by all mankind. Yet, a flat, in fact, brings more to us than we assume it to of its range of possibilities. A flat brings forth a sense of security - a place we call home. A place where individuality can by all means be exercised, and a providence of social seclusion from the ever-hustling city we all so yearn to avoid. With the precedent presence in Hong Kong, even the most claustrophobia-inducing flat can be home to many. We have fallen prey to conformity. It is almost as if purchasing a flat is one of mankind’s obligations if we wish for a stepping stone to success.

How come purchasing a flat has rendered us into such desperate means over the course of ten years? The property market has become a pomp to all walks of life. Bolstering of market prices by property agencies has been the social epidemic of the century for Hong Kong. Prophets of doom have given us the prediction that by the end of 2018, flats worth below $10000 per square foot would vanish in its entirety under the market’s radar. The soaring property prices gave rise to clash of inflation over the course of a century and the citizens’ low rising salary increment, setting the threshold unreachable for citizens to step foot into. Fracasing the gallivantsation of property hegemony, the government has given means to support the citizens giving illustration of the price cooling measures. However, with the stamp duty levy in hand, it imposes immense difficulty and contradiction on the general public. Consequences of such render us, not only drowning in confusion of the current conundrum, but the ever-so-belittling idea of not being able to annunciate ownership of a condo.

Shoebox units, coffin homes, feathers of houses with nano-descriptive features are renowned amongst the echoing of our eardrums. The proximity of living in such undesirable neurotically distressing environments cedes us the undermining of youngsters’ quality of life. Emigration due to the escape of wealth disparity is not only seen as common, but a phenomenon all the rage amongst rapscallions. With such apocalyptic happenstrokes of citizens’ fleeing from the country in hopes of getting a final grasp of the ray of light to future, isn’t it something we should all scrutinize to resolve?

Indeed, owning a flat does provide you with an ever so admirable status quo. But does it relinquish our dignity to nil if one cannot afford accommodation? One’s future is not simply determinant as to whether he owns a condominium, but the perseverance to face adversity in life. One’s success is determinant on one’s abilities, but not the fact that one doesn’t have a place to call home on his own. The kryptonite to one’s superpowers is not limited to the superficial beings on earth, but the internal pre-eminence one possesses. By nurturing ourselves to stand our grounds in mere utterances of benevolence, meekness and to strive for the competence in capability, we are giving ourselves our own sense of purpose. Start, by building a home for ourselves. With education, we build our base. With the rule of law, we stack our pillars. With a just society, we construct our sheltering rooftop. Halt, in the pursuit of materialistic needs. Instead, why don’t we climb up the notorious social ladder by the fulfilment of our own Hierarchy of Needs? Internal self-actualization would provide us with an environment fully dependent on our own selves, and unlimit ourselves from the facile determinant of owning a flat as the instrument to a candescent future.

It is our choice to be a slave of flats. It is our choice to be limited by social conformity. It is indeed a sickening reality that we must all face. Yet, on no account are we entitled to abide by the social norms. Live with our heads held high with spiritual satisfaction, or live under the feet of fraternal pressure.
Losing Life or Losing Weight?
6E Eva Ye

That was the first day of school. While I was chitchatting with my friends, I accidentally overheard the conversation of the girls nearby. “I gained four pounds throughout the holiday! I must go on diet now.” “Oh, have you heard of the diet pills called Yamada Miyura? I saw the comments online were rather positive.” “Really? I also want to order some of those. I can lose weight effortlessly, without exercising!”

I was in effusive shock then. Bombarded with various weight-loss advertisements, teenagers nowadays have unconsciously been implanted with the deep-rooted mindset of the distorted value, “Slim is beauty”. Comparing to the same kind of advertisement a decade ago, which urged women to lose weight by exercise, the message delivered hasfurtively changed from bolstering self-confidence to lowering self-esteem. Last Saturday, a talk organized by Department of Health was held in the Hospital Authority. The talk was conducted by three distinguished guests, Dr Alex Li, Miss Linda and Kitty. They mentioned the reflection and solution towards the viral trend of teens overdosing on weight-loss pills. In a 2-hour long talk, they expressed disagreement to this value and urged the public to raise awareness of the harmful nature of the pills.

Dr Alex Li, an experienced psychologist at Queen Elizabeth’s Hospital, first took over the microphone. Reminded of the experiences of his patients, he pointed out that the root of the problem, which is Hong Kong people’s obsession with slimming pills, boiled down to two misconceptions, “Slim is beauty” and “Diet pills accelerate the process of losing weight”. The former one has been taken heed by the public lately. “Overusing diet pills could lead to underweight problem.” Dr Li further explained, “According to a report done by the University of Hong Kong, 40% of women aged 20-29 years old have a BMI lower than 18.5, which is deemed as underweight according to the BMI system. Another survey conducted among secondary students in Hong Kong revealed the fact that over 40% of them tried to lose weight through inappropriate means.” It is blatant that the value is upheld mainly among women, and the age group being affected has shown a sign of younger trend. Sadly though, little do they know the negative impacts brought on by being underweight could be detrimental or even fatal. Physically, they might be tortured by malnutrition and palpitations. Psychologically, they might suffer from illusions and hallucinations. In extreme cases, anorexia or depression might appear, encroaching the young souls that once were glowing.

As for the second misconception, it simply indicates the heinousness and hatefulfulness of the marketing ploys that immoral companies have adopted. With the greedy ambition of taking a share in the lucrative market, they go to great lengths to exaggerate the effects of the pills and overpromise, luring the naive and innocent customers to believe in the lie of diet pills. By doing so, the customers will flock to buy the products, which creates the atmosphere of the popularity of diet pills. As a result, the businessmen are able to achieve profit-maximization to further boost the sales with ease, though it should be treated as a violation of Undesirable Medical Advertisement Ordinance. When speaking of the businessmen’s misbehavior in marketing strategies, the social worker at Health Is Beauty Association, Miss Linda, joined the discussion by giving consent to Dr Alex Li’s point. She continued to add another feature of such tactics — taking advantage of celebrity effects. The young generation these days are especially keen on idolizing K-POP stars or Cantonese pop stars, attributed to their sex appeal and charismatic appearance. The youngsters are bewitched, if not deluded, by the famous. They naturally want to imitate the stars’ behavior so as to achieve self-actualization. Seeing their idols being slim, they also aspire to have a slender body shape to be physically attractive. Due to the fact
that the teens are in their puberty, they are even more susceptible to peer pressure and peer recognition, which will help them have their self-esteem boosted. A skyrocketing number of juveniles are falling into the whirlpool of slimming. The government should put a halt to such advertisements. “In fact,” Miss Linda referred to policies implemented by other countries, “France, Italy, Spain and Israel have set an example by taking action in banning underweight modeling.” Besides women's misconception and incomprehension towards diet pills and the marketing skills used by the reckless, another factor, the accessibility of the Internet under globalization might also disseminate the viral trend. For the sake of the advancement of technology, online shopping websites like Amazon, Ebay, Taobao and iHerb have disseminated the slimming products’ reputation of quality worldwide. Customers, even a 16-year-old could be able to buy them. Miss Linda sighed when mentioning this point, paused for a while and went on to talk about the possible solution to this slimming mania. She appealed to people in different social strata to work with concerted effort to change the situation. For parents, they should teach their children to pay attention to inner beauty and inculcate the correct mindset into the future generation’s mind. The mass media, being the most powerful tool to spread messages to the society, should by no means hold code of ethics to prevent such misleading advertisements from poisoning people’s minds.

After a round of heated discussion between Dr Li and Miss Linda regarding reasons and impacts of the prevalence of slimming pills, Kitty, the 21-year-old ex-patient, who was just discharged from Queen Elizabeth’s Hospital, finally broke her silence. She first expressed her gratefulness towards the assistance provided by doctors and nurses for over five years. Reminiscing the nightmarish experiences at the hospital and struggling with anorexia, she could not help shedding tears from her eyes. As a passionate follower of the slimming pills, she took two to three kinds of these pills per day and hoped to lose weight effectively within weeks. Exceeding the suggested dosage, she started to become bony and scruffy and was not able to walk or even breathe for a long time. She felt regretful for taking a shortcut to lose weight and said that she had been a cautionary tale.

She said the root of problem is threefold like what Miss Linda just mentioned. Growing up in a single parent family, she reiterated the importance of the company provided by parents. As the significant others, parents should provide proper guidance for their children and tell them everyone is unique, despite their body shape or weight. In the meantime, the school should also shoulder the responsibility to educate the children holistically, but not just teach exam-oriented curriculum — awareness, alert and appreciation should be promoted as well. “The school ought to advocate inner beauty by telling the side effects of pills. Besides, critical thinking skills should be cultivated to prevent the youth from falling into the trap.” The reason why she could purchase various kinds of illegal slimming pills was because of the lack of surveillance online. Thus she demanded the government to set up more binding legislations and monitoring for online purchase, such as trade description for online goods, in order to allow the customers to buy the products with a guarantee of the quality.

Slim does not mean beauty. That beauty is not to be moulded by models and judged with the same standards should be forever carved in our hearts. One is beautiful as long as he or she shines with his or her own glory of individuality. With appreciation and acceptance, the beauty of individuality and generosity will descend on all of us. Prevention is always better than the cure, let’s visit to participate in health campaigns and activities. Now that France, Italy, Spain and Israel have taken a step forward, it is high time for Hong Kong to follow their step, and to pave way for a thriving future.
To Predict the Future –
Through Destruction or Rectification?

6E Eva Ye

Five hundred and forty-five. One point seven. Three point four. Do you know the meaning of the above figures? If I tell you that they are and will be the bedrock of predicting the future that we heavily depend on, would you consider my words as a tale of truth? As the self-assumed “rulers” of the planet Earth, we humans seem to take pride in the revolutionary technologies created. Yet, we’ve bitten the hands that feed us and imposed acute destruction to our homeland. The world is becoming warm overtime. So to truly predict the future, we have to step out of our comfort zone and rescue the Earth from running a temperature.

In fact, life on our beloved Earth is in jeopardy. The aforementioned figures, referring respectively to five hundred and forty five GTC of carbon emission in total, a rise of one point seven degrees in temperature and a rise of three point four millimeters per year in sea level, has depicted the exacerbating health condition of the Earth. Someone might question, “Hasn’t the government been working on improvement?” Yes, but far from enough. With the principle of reducing carbon emission, several agreements were reached. For example, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement who was signed by seventy developed and developing countries. But they are all paper tigers with no binding power. Now that US has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement at will, sacrificing the environment in exchange for economic growth, other countries have expressed discontent and dissatisfaction, claiming to follow the US’s step. The agreements once drafted for curing our scarred homeland have appeared to collapse before vanity. However, should we continue wasting time and whining about it?

The answer is definitely not negative. The clock is ticking. Countries need to stop being talking shops. Otherwise, our homeland will be exterminated, our civilization will be erased, our future will be effaced. What is the point of predicting the future if we do not even have one? “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi’s words seem particularly apt at this moment. Now or never, it’s time for us to change, to stop staying in the comfort zone and start doing something down to earth.

Ways of ameliorating global warming have been manifold. Participating in energy saving events, binding agreements reached amid countries are both viable and effective ways. Before the occurrence of these activities, however, the very first thing we all should do is, without doubt, have our awareness raised. So ladies and gentlemen, I appeal to you to uphold the two ‘M’ principles, moralism and minimalism. Though they seem high-sounding, these two principles can be easily integrated in our daily lives. Being a moral citizen is to be constantly aware of the waste you are creating in your consumption. Shopping does give you the evanescent pleasure but it brings to our Earth an eternal harm. Shockingly, 87.2 million tons of packaging waste in total are produced annually. When you know fully well the harm over-consumption brings, you will naturally want to change your behavior and that leads to my second principle, minimalism.

The meaning of minimalism is to live with fewer material possessions and purchase goods that meet our needs. Shopping is accompanied by packaging and the process of packaging involves various sources of carbon emission, be it the fuels used for machine or the materials like paper consumed. Substantially, through practicing minimalism, we are able to reduce the carbon emission and alleviate the burden our Earth endures.
“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” Mother Teresa’s words still hold true today. Undeniably, we are not able to make any difference on our own. Yet with concerted effort, we all can make omnipresent changes, starting from practicing the two ‘M’s, minimalism and moralism. Here I call upon all the representatives, to draw in horns, to step out of the comfort zone, to pave way for a thriving future. Together, we can be sure to make rectifications instead of destruction. Together, we can invent a more dynamic and diversified future. Thank you.
Simplicity is the Answer
6F Anson Cheung

Good morning schoolmates,

I am Chris Wong, the Student Ambassador of a youth environmental concern group. The world has changed, from time-consuming tailor-made clothes in the 16th century to machine-sewn fashion industry in the modern world; from home cooking as the mainstream delicacy to eating out being a worldwide prevalent choice. Lifestyle has been changing with technology, unfortunately, what’s behind this evolving lifestyle is actually massive pollution which harms the Earth to a horrendous extent. The temperature has been rising with the sea level and the concentration of greenhouse gases has multiplied since the Industrial Revolution. The Himalayan glaciers are melting much more rapidly and, there is no more complete sea ice in the Arctic Circle. Premonitions are looming over us. Do we have a chance to turn the tide? Yes indeed. Living a simpler life can be the key move to right our wrongs.

Materially speaking, living simpler can greatly reduce waste while at the same time ameliorate the increasing burden on our landfills. Citizens in Hong Kong produce one point five kilograms of waste per day, including disposable tableware, plastic bags and containers, cloths, tissue paper, you name it. For example, eating at home or bringing along your reusable containers when you get your takeaway food can reduce culinary waste. In addition, using water bottles instead of purchasing drinks from convenience stores can also produce less rubbish. To live simpler, we might need to forgo our hedonistic lifestyle, try to bring what you need when you voyage. It may sound intimidating and bothering, but to spare resources for the next generation, why not?

Furthermore, people nowadays love spending money on fast fashion. In other words, we overlook our need over consumption. Fashion labels always attract customers’ eyeballs with trendy and beautiful appearances and designs, and make them buy something they already have or not need on impulse. Just like phones, manufacturers always title their products with extravagant names associated with futuristic functions which are, most of the time, useless for normal users who only use their phones to communicate with friends and families. However, such marketing artifices successfully snare customers. To live simple and smart, we should be wary all the time before we make any purchase. Is the product necessary? Do I have similar gadgets at home? Do I need the features and functions of the device? Be aware of any exaggerating statements and never take the baits of commercial advertisements. By reducing overconsumption, we could arrive at a frugal lifestyle and use our products until the end of their life cycles.

Spiritually speaking, a simpler life can provide blanks in our schedules, so that we could gain time to reflect on ourselves. As I said, we are now often apt to a luxurious life. Every one of us wants to become a billionaire and enjoy life, but is that the only way towards a fulfilling life?

Nature, what humans are currently destroying, breeds life. Sadly, we can hardly notice such a fact as our flamboyant daily life has been misleading us towards something else. To lead a simpler life, we can spare time from excess entertainment and unbalanced work in order to explore our environment. We might be able to reach a more meaningful life and reflect on our materialistic past. Since then, being eco-friendly will no longer be harsh or hard to achieve, because all of us know how wonderful nature is and will commit ourselves to restoring harmony with nature.
Advancements in technology have sarcastically resulted in a decrease in sustainability. Every one of us should be responsible for such a tragic plight. Convenience-driven, impulsive shopping decisions should be eliminated for the whole good as the environment should not be depleted for our wasteful lifestyle. At the end of my speech, I hereby urge you all to take the pledge to lead a simpler life. Remember the saying, ‘Many a little makes a mickle’. To save this dying planet, we must act together, right here, right now! So, let’s think globally, and act locally, to maintain the intergeneration equity with a fine, sustainable earth.

Thank you!
Does Cosmetic Surgery Promote or Destroy Beauty?
6F Anson Cheung

Cosmetic treatments can actually be traced back to 3000 BC, when people used raw, untested materials to reconstruct broken noses. As time goes, modern plastic surgeries stemmed from the First World War, originally carried out to rebuild faces or other body parts for injured soldiers. Preliminarily, it is obvious that cosmetic surgeries contribute to our lives; however, in terms of the current proliferating cosmetic practices, that intention is obviously deviated leading us towards an undesirable pathway.

Undoubtedly, the advancement of modern cosmetic procedures still plays a vital role in medical procedures. Dozens of newly discovered cosmetic treatments assisted in life and death situations. For example, increments of skin grafting can immediacy keep severely burnt patients from further internal inflammation, which could lead to death easily. Such cosmetic technology development can improve public health while at the same time conserve one’s beauty. Although that means forsaking the naturally born appearance, as long as it prolongs lives, it prolongs beauty, given that there is no excessive or unnecessary application of such cosmetic treatments.

Unfortunately, the frequent occurrence of cosmetic surgery failures directly destroys beauty. Implementing cutting-edge technology often means taking a higher risk. The newer cosmetic procedures are taken, the higher the potential risk is involved, plus aesthetic operations are often irreversibly permanent, backfires can be disastrous. Simple as Botox injection, it was very popular when the technology first came on the cosmetic field, as it was tested to perfectly reshape the aging cheeks to give stunning looks just like teenagers do, but no one has ever thought of the possible consequences. The intrusive treatment eventually ends up making an appreciable number of patient’s face worn down, just like undergoing mutations.

Moreover, the obsession with cosmetically achievable mainstream outer beauty is destroying the beauty of uniqueness. Thanks to God, we are born different. That’s why our planet is always interesting and is open to exploration. Idolatry has brought massive impacts to global culture. Teenagers love to idolize those Korean celebrities which leads them to cosmetic surgeries, just to become photogenic. If we think deeper, this is actually a normalization of human faces, quite scary, isn’t it, but that’s the truth. If the current cosmetic culture keeps rolling as a snow ball, it should not take us long to see machine-made, duplication of faces in the Hong Kong society, which is happening in South Korea at the moment.

Last but not least, overwhelming skin-deep veneration towards cosmetic surgeries destroys the importance of inner beauty. To simply illustrate it, turning a duck into a swan on the outside doesn’t mean it is never going to ‘quack’ again on the inside. The nature of yourself cannot be changed by just replacing the outermost layer of feathers. To upgrade yourself, be the outstanding kind of person, we should always focus on the inside. No one has ever picked on the appearances of Albert Einstein or Stephen Hawking. People truly respect them by judging their contribution to our planet, hence making them some of the mightiest people in history.

All in all, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. We should never risk nor intend to modify our originally born appearance to satisfy others. In contrast, we should be adding value to our inner beauty. Through continuous knowledge absorption, on-going skill training and real-life challenges encounters, we may be able to develop a more unique, more attractive character. So, stop hypnotizing ourselves in the wonderland of outer beauty, and cease the influential cosmetic culture from destroying inner beauty. Remember, outer beauty is transient, but inner beauty is long-lasting.
Meaningful Talk –
Is being slim the only way to be beautiful?
6F Joy Lee

In view of the ubiquitous yet distorted value, ‘Slim is beauty’, which inflicts adverse influence on adolescents, the Department of Health decided to hold a talk to spread the correct message which should be upheld at all times, ‘appreciation of the inner beauty’. We are honoured to have three speakers with us last Monday, whom were the medical specialist, Mr Leo Leong, the social worker, Mr Chris Wong and the ex-patient, Miss June Lee. They utilised their knowledge in their expertise and drawn on past experience to inculcate the correct message into our minds. And prevent us, the vulnerable from falling prey to this twisted mindset.

“Two common misconceptions on values and diet pills concern me the most.” Mr Leong, the doctor, said worriedly. ‘Slim is beautiful’ is the value that most people in this society bolster, but is it the only way to be beautiful? People nowadays are in pursuit of a small waist, thin arms and legs or even a thigh gap. It is succinct that the boney body shape doesn’t suit the ideal Body Mass Index (BMI), which depicts the healthiest weight of adolescents. The most appropriate range is from 20 to 25. Lamentably, most adolescents are chasing after the body with a BMI lower than the ideal range. They desire to be slim within a short time and effortlessly, so they turn to diet pills. They are under the impression that it is a shortcut to being skinny as they don’t want to undertake a regular exercise regime, is this beneficial to our health if it trims people down without exercising or having a balanced diet? Nobody can lose weight by merely taking diet pills, physical exercise as well as a balanced diet are compulsory. He pointed out, ‘Relying on diet pills can only be conducive to losing weight, since it suppresses your appetite, and if you stop taking them, the nutrients can be absorbed better than before, which leads to the weight rebound.’ Diet pills are detrimental to health for another reason as they bring side effects such as palpitations, which are uneven heartbeat and also hallucination are bound to occur. He also expressed his concern over the exaggerated advertisements of the diet pills, which lure many teenagers to buy those deleterious pills. To address this, the government should have a more stringent Undesirable Medical Advertisement Ordinance, in order to strengthen the surveillance over diet pill purchases.

“Talking about the despicable advertisements, the exaggeration and the marketing ploys are the culprits of this prevalent phenomenon,” Mr Wong, the social worker, mentioned. The marketing ploys that the mass media adopt, are the celebrity effect and sex appeal. Some immoral companies hire celebrities as spokespeople and some attractive models to captivate the potential customers and disseminate the distorted mindset to more customers buying their slimming products. That the teenagers are susceptible to the influence of advertisements and conformity is an undeniable truth. Teenagers want to obtain peer recognition and have some shared knowledge to boost their self-esteem, which is an essential in the personal development during puberty. And the need to gain sense of affiliation to fulfil the development of self-esteem through common topic, in this case, dieting. It is morbid for companies to take the advantage of the mentality of teenagers to gain further profits from this lucrative market, and in doing so, harming the health of hundreds. As a result, he offered 2As as advice. The first one is awareness. Teenagers are vulnerable to conformity, so we have to be alert and keep a clear mind to say no to conformity. That’s the way out of the trick the companies are using. The second one is appreciation. We teenagers follow the mainstream value, pursuing the appearance, but we never look into our inner beauty. Inner beauty should never be neglected as this is what make us a great person.
“Speaking of inner beauty, I neglected my inner beauty and indulged myself in pursuing a skinny body shape under the influence of the prevalent advertisements and the desire to be accepted by my friends,” Miss Lee, the ex-patient, shared. She succumbed to peer pressure and started taking unregistered diet pills purchased online. As teenagers, friends are of utmost importance, the same could be said for Miss Lee. Wanting to be concurrent with her friends, she bought inexpensive diet pills online due to budget restrictions. She suffered from palpitations and also anorexia. Anorexia is actually a mental illness that restricts the appetite of the patients and develops feelings of hatred towards food in order to be thin. The online purchases were to blame as the ingredients of the pills were illegal and were detrimental to health, be it physical or mental. It took Miss Lee three years to recover from them and the situation was still stuck in reverse. Those unmonitored medication online inflicted lifelong health risks on customers. Miss Lee felt extremely regret, and showcased herself as a cautionary tale for gaining peer recognition blindly. Miss Lee stressed, ‘It is important for schools to teach students the correct mindset of appreciating the inner beauty and stop pursuing slimness. For the government, Trade Description Ordinance has to be tightened up so that the innocent adolescents will not be seduced by exaggerated descriptions.

Actions have to be taken, however, to help the friends who are walking on the wrong track, the best way is to dial the hotline for more information. Check if their health conditions are deteriorating, if so, encourage them to consult a doctor. For ourselves, we should buck the trend and don’t follow suit. The ‘Slim is beauty’ mindset can definitely put us in risks. On the condition that diet pills are needed, we should always gain knowledge from verified doctors and ask for doctor’s advice. Professional medical consultation is required for purchasing any drugs, and also drugs should not be bought through online shops. At last, share the message of upholding inner beauty, don’t neglect it. I perceive the world will become a better place if we start to cherish our inner beauty, and by that time, we will all be showering not only with health but genuine inner beauty in everyone. Buck the distorted trend, create our conceivable future.
Climate Change:
The Responsibility We Should All Bear
6F Cheston Leung

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am the representative of Hong Kong. Today I’m honoured to be here with all of you to talk about our future. It has long been acknowledged that the future should be created by inventing something new. However, have we ever thought of the dreadful impacts this notion has brought to our ecosystem? The temperature of the Earth has hit a record high level throughout history, the rate of temperature increase has nearly doubled in the past 50 years and will no longer be suitable for humans to live if it continues to rise. But don’t feel hopeless yet, the only ones who can change the future are ourselves. As an old saying goes, “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” Are you willing to see our next generation living in a dying planet? If not, it’s time for us to do something to change our future.

Thanks to the excessive emission of carbon dioxide by humans, the ozone layer of our planet has already been damaged. This has fostered global warming and has caused two major harms to our future. One notable impact is violating our natural food chain. Some recent research showed that by 2050, almost 40% of our plant and animals would have been wiped out. With a large amount of disappearing species, ecological imbalance will probably occur and humans will barely be able to get consumable food from nature. By that time, many places on the Earth will be suffering from famine which leads to a large amount of death.

Apart from harming the ecosystem, the increase of extreme weather is another notable phenomenon. The increasing amount of extreme weather has dire consequences to our economy and will deprive people of personal safety, which is a dangerous threat to many of us. For instance the hurricane in USA recently had deprived many people of life and devastated many properties. Is that the future we all conceive? I’m sure the answer is definitely a ‘No’. So what are we waiting for? Stop waiting for the future to change, change the future before it’s too late!

To look into retrospect, people had once reached a landmark accord on curbing the rapid rise of temperature. Yet, it lacks binding power and all signed parties are backstepped. The withdrawal of the US from Paris Agreement this year is a wake-up call for the entire society. It is imperative that the head of state should roll out new measures. Now, I would like to propose a “3Cs” holistic approach to tackle the problem at its roots. The first C is “control”. The government should shoulder the responsibility to implement policies to control carbon emissions in their own countries by different ways. For instance, they should penalise those factories with high greenhouse gas emission, or subsidize a certain amount of money for electrical vehicles to reduce pollutants emitted by cars. The second C is “consumption”. The governments of all countries should educate their citizens to change their consumption behaviour, not to waste so many natural resources. Without excessive consumption of natural resources, the burden of our mother Earth will be eased. Last but not least, “cooperation”. This is a vital part of the approach. The approach only comes into effect when citizens are willing to comply with their government’s suggestions. For sure it could not succeed without full participation between all parties.

So, after all, do you still think that tackling climate change is out of reach? As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “If you want to change the world, start with yourself.” The responsibility for making the world a better place lies on me and you. With our concerted efforts, I’m sure that little difficulty is there for us to foresee a glittering future.
When Animals Cry, Can We Hear?
6F Omega Tang

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, let’s pause for a second. Do you hear the animals cry? The forests, the ocean, or even the cities are fraught with animals’ sorrows and tears. Are you aware of this? Do you feel it? The fact that they can’t talk in our language seems to rationalize our ignorance towards them. Yet, they are accusing us of our cruelty with swans wrapped with plastic and litter in marine animals’ corpses, and the list goes on and on. Are we that detached, not feeling a thing for others’ suffering? Are we and animals that extraneous, taking paths that never cross?

You may ask, “Why do animals cry so hard?” We cause direct harm to them. In Russia, people consider hunting a leisure activity. Russians assemble at the woods and hunt. Blue Sheep, Musk Ox or Bingo, you name it, are all considered trophies of the day. The squeals of pain are inconspicuous, if not arousing for the hunters. When the activity is not coined “hunting”, others name it a “custom” alternatively. In Taiji Japan, they call it a tradition to slaughter and capture dolphins, which enabled their ancestors to survive because dolphins provided them with fresh meat when sources of nutrition were scarce. Such savage actions are horrendous, but even more atrocious are those who allow the bloodshed to continue. Sadly, despite being well-informed about the relentless killing and hunting, most of us decide not to hear animals’ plead for mercy.

You may ask again, why should we be held responsible if we urban people don’t hunt or kill at all? Nonetheless, we provide the killers economic incentives. Businessmen looking at that duck or goose seek to maximize profit. Selling Foie gras, which is the duck liver, a premier food, is surely a lucrative business. But inhumane businessmen force feed the ducks non-stop, for the sake of profit, at the expense of the animals’ health. Again, we are using economic prosperity as an excuse to exploit animals, and we don’t care the least to wipe their tears.

You may ask, what if I don’t hunt and don’t run an inhumane business? Let’s visualize a tranquil ocean. A fish is dancing, ... on a plastic bag! No, no, no. It should be a ‘tranquil’, a dead ocean, since it’s scattered with garbage. The fish is struggling away from a plastic bag, looking at the corpse of his brother who swallowed a plastic straw minutes ago, period. Astounded? Our lavish lifestyle and tremendous pollution has wreaked havoc. Thousands of animals have lost their natural habitats in the wake of global warming. The deforestation for forests with extinction has demolished their natural habitat as well. Many species of animals are threatened to go extinct. Orangutans from Borneo are one example. Portions of the rainforest, the habitat of Orangutans, are being turned into palm oil plantations so as to satisfy our ‘needs’ for palm oil. Just as animals vary from place to place, so do the catastrophes they suffer. And we are all culprits.

Do you hear the animals cry? Due to the accretion of exploitation of innocent animals, there is an uptick of awareness of their tears among a few communities, yet, bounded within the members. They are the ones who first understand animals’ language, and decide to hear. Fishes can’t live in the ocean, orangutans can’t live in the rainforest. I hope these indictments will alter our lifestyle. I hope we will all slow down and listen up to learn compassion and empathy. After all, humans and animals both come from nature. When we are enjoying peace and comfort, it’s unfair for animals to suffer. Thank You.
A Mission for Now
6F Omega Tong

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, when asked what the most indispensable elements that foster human development are, people will unanimously reach a consensus that tranquil nature is one of the answers. However, once we look at our planet, the only sentiment is lamentation. Just look at the catastrophes around us! That the destructive typhoon Mangkut caused extensive damage in Hong Kong was profound among all of us. Even if you are living in a placid district, the 3-day holiday itself told you how substantial the damage was. There have been loads of more severe earthquakes and tsunamis around the world, not to mention the rising sea levels, a chronic disaster yet not gaining as much attention as those instant perils mentioned above. As Steve Irwin once commented, “The single biggest threat to our planet is the destruction of habitat, and wildlife can co-exist.” We will be living on the planet for many years to come. If the planet is damaged, we are the ones who bear the consequences. As students, what exactly can we do? Can we, as individuals, really save the world?

Before answering this question, let me tell you guys some ‘interesting’ facts about how we human beings are polluting our Earth. According to The World Counts, every year, an estimated 2.2 billion tons of waste is dumped into our oceans. Meanwhile, 3.7 billion plastic bags have been produced worldwide this year. In the last 20 decades, we have added 2.3 trillion tons of carbon dioxide to our atmosphere, with half of this amount added in the last 30-35 years alone. The culprit of extreme weathers is always global warming. And you and I are clearly accomplices. These facts are indictments of our current lifestyle. We have been affected by the dominant ideology in our society, which is ‘to spend more’. The consumer-oriented culture pervades every aspect of our lives. As a result, youngsters are obliviously indoctrinated to a hedonistic culture, making impulsive shopping decisions. Some adolescents are even obsessed with materialistic possessions to fulfill the insatiable desires for material comfort. These lifestyles result in overconsumption, and we just pursue wealth and material satisfaction at the expense of our environment. So, shouldn’t we start to think about altering our current lifestyles?

Some may say recycling or upcycling can alleviate the problem if it has been done well among societies. Nonetheless, recycling and upcycling are simply out of question when it comes to waste reduction. This is where a simple and sustainable life, or even minimalism comes into play. Minimalism is a style that is characterized by extreme sparseness and simplicity. Adopting a minimalist lifestyle is to reduce to using necessities only. Instead of being addicted to consumption, it allows you to produce less waste. Though, the rationale of minimalism is far more than that. A simple life with fewer things empowers us to find freedom. Freedom from fear, freedom from worry and freedom from trappings of consumer culture we’ve built our lives around. We need not compare ourselves to others when we stick to a simple lifestyle. Hence, we are free from fear, worry and the trappings of consumer culture we’ve built lives around. We need not compare ourselves with others when we stick to a simple lifestyle. Hence, we are free from fear, worry and trappings from the show-off competitions often taking place among teenagers. True, for us, students, pursuing a minimalist lifestyle is not that easy, because it includes stopping hoarding and clearing the clutter you own. However, it is at least something we can do to preclude our Earth from having a chronic environmental crisis devastating our already fragile ecosystem.

To save the world, we have to act immediately. Not only should we practice minimalism, but join NGO campaigns also. There are myriads of possibilities, such as buy-nothing day or 10-day zero
waste pledge, committing to such campaigns can help solve the pollution problem also. What’s more, we can fund various NGO campaigns for them to help other countries. Lamentably, with all the green initiatives, still the overall picture seems grim. Only with our endeavor, we can change the world.

Ladies and gentleman, this is the sole reason I came here, to spread the message of minimalism. For every single one sitting in this room, we can all advocate such a mentality with a few clicks on our smartphones with the aid of technology. A few ‘likes and shares’ on special media, be it Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat, help a lot already. Even though we know that the tenets of green living are at odds with the ethos of consumerism, we must keep it up. A concern group, a certain demographic or even particular states or countries are inadequate for saving the world. We need the efforts of everyone on earth.

Indeed, the quote from Steve Irwin doesn’t end there, “We need to reach a balance where people, habitat, and wildlife can co-exist – if we don’t, everyone loses...one day.” Our offspring have thr right to explore the world like a sapphire, which we should not deprive them of. We cannot unscrupulously leave them with a desolate land. As the old saying goes, “better late than never”. Every small gesture we make counts. Many mickle makes a muckle. With concerted efforts, little difficulty is there for us to conceive of our beautiful future. Thank you.
The Minimalist’s True Nature
6F Ethan Tsang

Greetings, ladies and gentlemen. Our climate is changing. For instance, super hurricanes, violent
typhoons and tornados are destroying our homelands. The average temperature has exceedingly
increased by 1 degree Celsius in August this year. Smog problems in China, deforestation in the Amazon
and melting icebergs in the North Pole are overwhelming. All of these are seemingly not our business
but actually tremendously affect nature, thanks to prodigious human activities. Although many
economies and authorities have already signed up some agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the
Paris Agreement, to restrain their greenhouse gases emissions, and hence, to slow down the aftermath
of the globalization, the papers do not effectively restrict industrialization or cease massive climate
change. Nature is being destroyed. So, what can we do to deal with this dire strait?

Recently, a group of Hong Kong pioneers advocated how minimalism helps preserve our precious
nature. They live in a container house in urban areas, having their own farm and consuming
environmentally-friendly products in order to save our planet. I am a minimalist. I honor this simpler
lifestyle. By eating less meat due to the large amount of carbon dioxide emissions from cows and pigs
and buying foods at a local farmer’s market, which consume less energy than big industrial suppliers to
produce and transport food, I construct my own minimalist space. Of course, I can reduce my own carbon
footprint and ‘plastic footprint’, but it is just a drop in the bucket. Yet, I cannot save nature by myself
alone. No man is an island. If the whole community takes this baby step, we can even change the fate of
our planet from a bleak future. As a global citizen, we have the responsibilities to save our nature.

However, the society of hustle and bustle drives people away from minimalism, and, on the flip
side, highlights materialism. If you walk around your apartment counting every item you find, the tally
will probably be in the hundreds or thousands. If you are to then go around counting every item that is
absolutely essential, your tally will probably be in the dozens. This disparity between what we buy and
what we actually need leads to tremendous overconsumption that drains the Earth’s resources and
accelerates climate change.

Every cloud has a silver lining. There are a few tips for everyone to pursue minimalism. Simplify
your diet for simple meals. Some people have an extremely simple diet of rice and beans while others
find a plant-based diet or minimalist raw vegan diet to be right for them. But a simple meal doesn’t
imply a bland diet. You may still cook your own delicious dishes of the right portion to reduce kitchen
waste. In addition, decluttering is another easiest way to kick start your journey to minimalism. Declare
a clutter-free zone in your apartment as inspiration to live with less. Enjoy the calm and neat
environment. Expand the zone a little bit each day. The ripple effect may eventually change your
building, your district, your country and even the whole world. A minimalist community may effectively
reduce waste and put a curb on climate change. With endeavor, minimalism can help us to construct a
beautiful world.

When minimalism spreads to every single corner in the globe and all communities adopt this
lifestyle, every one of us can work as a minimalist, communicate as a minimalist, and live as a minimalist.
I am convinced that the nature will be as peaceful as what we have conceived.

Thank you.
Dear Jess,

Thank you for your letter. I truly understand the distressful dilemma you are in and have been going through. Yet, despite all the hardships that you are facing, it is good that you have decided to let the disquieting and haunting thoughts in your mind be spoken. After all, freeing your troubled mind and seeking help from others is the cornerstone of tackling a problem. Here, I would like to offer some advice regarding the two problems of career prospect and arranged marriage you are confronting.

Indeed, career prospect remains an exceedingly pervasive and influential in our lives, especially in the stage of adolescence. This topic seems to revolve around us any time, anywhere and I understand some parents have indeed been tremendously dominant and adamant when it comes to their children’s career prospect. It is also more than true that the phenomenon of innumerable parents meddling with their teenage children’s future is getting more omnipresent than ever. So it is absolutely understandable that you youngsters are discontented and bitter about this. Yet, every story comes in a few versions when it is told by different characters. So, before jumping to the conclusion, let us not forget to put ourselves into our parents’ shoes.

That every parent wants the best for their children is an inarguable and undeniable truth. I understand that football has an irreplaceable place in your heart and I am sorry that your parents are coercing you to be a lawyer instead. However, they are doing it out of the unequivocal and unconditional love for you. They might have expressed their love through a way that is not always in line with yours, but at the end of the day, every parent would love to see their children’s lives blossom with genuine felicity and fruitfulness. I hope that you could try to see and understand their acts from their perspectives and establish a harmonious yet dynamic parent-children relationship. I know that it is not easy to maintain a healthy relationship thanks to the incessant, controversial conflicts fueled by the clash of a generation gap. For instance, you mentioned in your previous letter that you are currently wrestling with the dilemma of whether you should grab the golden opportunity to go to the football training in the US. Yet, there are always more solutions than problems, right?

In this case, I suggest you seek the answers in the factors of the decision of career prospect. Career and interest are the two essentials when it comes to career prospect, but who says they are mutually exclusive? On the contrary, I advise you to ponder over the quandary by considering both career and interest so as to strike a balance in your career prospect, as well as a compromise between your parents’ and your own desires and aspirations. To put it more concretely, you could take an aptitude test which refers to a systematic means that tests your abilities in various fields and eventually tells you your most suitable career. By undertaking an objective aptitude test, perhaps you would finally find the answers to your problem, deciding whether to attend the training in the US would be the best for you.

Apart from the career prospect problem, I also understand that you are facing the trouble of arranged marriage. I know arranged marriage is an extremely old-fashioned and unreasonable act especially for you adolescents as the freedom of love should always be upheld and highlighted. However, in the meantime, an arranged marriage is also a traditional custom and ritual. Although your
parents’ decision is not that desirable, it is still understandable that their traditional Indian mindset has driven them to this resolution they hold. At this point, you could try to hang out with that boy and see how things go. Perhaps you would see sparks fly when you two get to know each other more. The crux of the solution, however, lies in the genuine communication between you and your parents.

I understand that you youngsters have a mindset that differs from that of your parents and that you would rather use white lies to cover the problem. Yet, not only could white lies not alleviate the problem, but they actually exacerbate the conflicts by ruining the relationship. Remember, there is always an exit to this labyrinth if only you try to communicate with your parents with sheer honesty and sincerity.

I know that it must have been tough for you these days, but I hope you would bear in mind that every cloud has a silver lining and that no man is an island. Do not fret, there are always solutions to every puzzle and it is always wise to seek help and advice from others. After all, when you are drowning in a quandary, remember that “when life gives you lemons, make lemonades.” Please feel free to write to me if you still have any more confusion. I would gladly help you through the adversity.

Best regards,
Agony Aunt
Discipline: A Cornerstone for One’s Life
6F Herman Yeung

With textbooks, we are able to acquire much knowledge in various areas. With teachers, we are able to acquire much knowledge in all-encompassing. Yet, with what can we enjoy our genuine school life and holistic development? All of us would unanimously claim discipline is of utmost importance. Surprisingly, the standards of discipline in schools are currently declining at an appalling rate. Can you imagine our school and even the society would someday suffering in chaos?

Honestly, a myriad of bad behavior is carried out by students violating the conventional school rules. For instance, students usually hand in their homework after the deadline, pay less heed to teachers’ lessons, cheat in exams or even play truant. These kinds of misbehaviors are prodigiously prevalent among the youth. In fact, there is no doubt that students may receive specific punishment owing to their misbehavior. Nonetheless, they are not given the deterrent effects resulting in more lenient punishments, such as demerits, lines or detention etc. If the teenagers who have done something abominable have already received the punishment but they fail to feel guilty for their incorrect behavior, the influences brought out can be fundamentally formidable.

While the standards of discipline are deteriorating, the interpersonal relationship, be it among adolescents or between students and teachers, is declining at the same time. Students nowadays intentionally step out of line and their misbehavior is inevitably conducive to the wrath and dissatisfaction of teachers. Hence, teachers are subject to punish students and students may keep being insubordinate to express their disagreement, which in turn leads to a vicious cycle. On the other hand, conflicts among teenagers may easily occur as some of them enjoy undertaking bad behaviors, such as bullying or cheating. With the emergences of arguments or quarrels, the cohesions in schools will certainly decay resulting in deleterious classroom management. There is no difficulty in imaging the academic results and performance of students will, moreover, exacerbate in a disharmonious learning environment. Furthermore, not only will the school’s reputation be unavoidably affected but also the social status of graduates in the future will be severely damaged. Due to the erroneous atmosphere, teenagers, the future pillars, may not comply with the law and order in society, increasing crime rate and attributing to social disharmony. However, why are students still unrestrained and reckless? To address the problems at its root, we must ascertain the reasons behind why students misbehave.

Beyond doubt, adolescents are now in puberty and they are encountering both physical and psychological changes that may prevent them from adapting to the new environment. They are, in addition, liable to be rebellious and tend to become anti-social to express their uniqueness and sense of selfhood. However, they are not mature enough to think carefully before taking actions and lack critical thinking. Additionally, for the sake of sense of excitement and felicity, they are inclined to behave abnormally. Aside from the individual reasons, their peers and parents are also attributions of students’ misbehaviour. Peers, as one of the most crucial significant others of teenagers, are in fact affecting each other every day. In order to gain a sense of affiliation, students are vulnerable to peer pressure and conformity. When some of their friends behave badly, they may somehow follow suit to gain peer recognition, raising their self-esteem. All the same, most parents in Hong Kong adopt permissive or uninvolved parenting styles as they are perhaps working parents who have insufficient time to get along with their own children. That’s why spoiling kids is so prevalent in society and as children are not in compliance with school rules, their parents may literally tolerate and connive them without any proper education, regrettably. It is not astonishing to discover that students conduct themselves improperly.
You may wonder if school has actually mapped out the school rules and provided education for students but why isn’t it feasible? Indeed, it is ludicrous for schools to not be able to teach students about righteousness. With low deterrent effects of punishment, students may simply neglect the true and core meaning of being right and they became indifferent to those punishments. Speaking of which, while students come to school for education, the lessons are, ironically, not demanding enough or way too demanding for students nowadays. It is succinct that the deprivation of engagement and lack of stimulation denude the holistic development and students may not immerse themselves in lessons, resulting in some unwanted and undesirable behaviour. What’s more, school has never pondered the attention span of students at schools and due to the exam-oriented syllabus, teachers will certainly drill the knowledge into students resulting in their disinterest in learning and study. Consequently, we can conclude that owing to self-centredness, peer pressure, inappropriate parenting style and incomprehensive school education, students misbehave.

Don’t you think that it’s about time something was done to retain our harmony in society? Doubtlessly, discipline is the only way out. However, discipline does not mean strictly the prohibitions or obstacles of one’s liberty and authority. It, otherwise, provides people with the guidelines to utilise their freedom in a right manner. As we all know, personal ambitions are actually standing in the way of the true order in the community, posing danger to us. Discipline, a cornerstone of everybody’s life, should be upheld ubiquitously, followed by concrete and crucial improvement.

Raising the standard of discipline must be launched as soon as possible. It does not mean to nail down corporal punishment towards students, though. A positive discipline approach, accompanied by the ascension of positive reinforcement and encouragement, is highly recommended in my opinion. In the short term, schools should begin and attempt to alter the curriculum step by step and bolster the holistic development of our future pillars. Through inculcating moral education and code of conducts into students’ mind, students may be allowed to receive positive reinforcement so that they will gain the tendency to adhere to the rules. Meanwhile, schools should come to realize the truth that every student has differences in their needs. In order to cater for them, schools may modify the teaching methodologies by utilising various materials, resources, electronic devices etc. and facilitate the streaming of classes to not just boost the efficiency in learning but also offer a suitable environment for learning with passion and ardour. On the other hand, in the long run, the position of social workers and educational psychologists must be elevated to help students foster their decency. With professional guidance, advice and assistance, both teachers and students can acquire more understanding about morality and humanities, raising the standard of the discipline on the school campus.

In hopes of achieving a breakthrough, it is mutually important for parents to change their parenting styles. Being a role model, they are conceived to be capable of inspiring their children. So they should never watch this deteriorating situation with folded arms yet take the initiative to behave themselves and adopt the hybrid of authoritative and authoritarian parenting style. With distinct rewards and punishment, they can effectively discipline their children. To step forward to a profound and potent success, there should be further cooperation between schools and parents specifically enhancing the parent-teacher collaboration to cultivate adolescents with both distinguished achievement and disciplined manner.
After all, no one will deny that school is a reflection of society while students are definitely the future pillars. The process of establishing the discipline of one is indispensable on account of depicting love and brotherhood in society. A preeminent and affluent American entrepreneur, Jim Rohn, once said, ‘Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.’ Discipline, as a bedrock and backbone of one’s entire life, is welcomed by all human beings and henceforth, they can shower with each other the joy of mutual caring and compromise. With the right manner and acceptance, little difficulty is there to perceive how amicable our future, be it at school or in society, will be.
The mere sense of living is joy enough.

- Emily Dickinson
Nicole

Nice to friends,
I love them all.

Care for friends,

Objective of mine is to have fun with them,

Love to spend time together,

Especially when I’m playing with them.

1C Nicole Lai
Happiness

Happiness is my best friend,
A friend that I can’t miss.
Please don’t leave me all alone.
Please stay with me all the time.
I can’t play happily without you.
No one can resist you.
Every moment, I miss you.
Smiling is your character.
Sharing with you is the most enjoyable thing to do in my life.

1C Natalie Loh
A Friend Is...

A friend is a helping hand that gives you hope when you are blue.
A friend is a strong body that brings warmth when you are cold.
A friend is a pair of lovely ears that listen when you cry.
A friend is a lovely angel that comforts you when you are miserable.

A friend is a supporter that is there for you, no matter what.
A friend is a supporter that always cares about you.
A friend is a supporter that fills your life with joy and beauty.
A friend is a supporter that helps you when you are frustrated.

A friend is a voice that tells you to be strong.
A friend is a voice that reminds you when you are wrong.
A friend is a voice that never judges you.
A friend is a voice that tells you the truth.

A friend is my angel.
A friend is my supporter.
A friend is my precious gift from God.

1D Abigale Hung
To My BFFs

Friends are priceless in our lives!
Real friends are hard to find.
Innocent friendship is a beautiful flower,
Encouraging us to stay truthful and loyal to one another.
No matter what you face, any challenge or difficulty, I
Devote myself to supporting you unconditionally.
Sharing with my besties all my sad stories.
Hope you can listen to me patiently with empathy.
If friendly runs away,
People will live in a sorrowful world every day.

1E Lydia Cheng
Examination

Extraordinary tests kill us like a trap.
X’s in red everywhere on your test like a blood bath.
Alphabet filling your report card up, as scary as a mess.
My mathematics test makes my mother mad.

Ink is dancing on the exam paper.
No knowledge should be dumped like litter.
All of us have to push our limit.
Tears, sweat and blood lead us to success.

Instagram and Facebook have to be stopped,
Or your smartphones have to be always off.
Neither shocked nor panicking, my buddy of mine!

1E Carson Lam
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is a very famous school in Hong Kong
Under the good environment of the school
I can study very happily and have many good friends

Can’t imagine how sad I would be if I couldn’t continue my study here
Happiness fills my school life
I am proud to be a Pui Ching student
No one knows what we will be after 6 years
Grateful memories will forever be in my mind!

1F Yanki Fan
Pui Ching Middle School is a great school,
Unbelievable school in Hong Kong.
I like Pui Ching a lot,
Can have a lot of fun in school.
However, it is so big that sometimes I get lost,
Interesting things can be found everywhere.
Never be unhappy in school,
Great school in Hong Kong

1F Thomas Chan
I Am

I am an energetic boy who loves playing basketball.
I wonder how to be trained up like an NBA player.
I hear cheering after I've shot a three.
I see all the audience clapping for me.
I want to grow tall like Giannis Antetokoumpo.
I am an energetic boy who loves playing basketball.

I pretend I am an NBA player.
I feel proud of myself being an NBA player.
I touch the basket without jumping.
I worry about if my shots are not in.
I cry if I lose the match.
I am an energetic boy who loves playing basketball.

I understand being an NBA player is hard.
I say that nothing is impossible.
I dream to fake people like Kyrie Irving.
I try to train up like Kyrie Irving.
I hope I can be an NBA player.
I am an energetic boy who loves playing basketball.

1F Bastien Ho
I Am

I am a girl who cares about the environment.
I wonder the earth will be cleaner.
I hear the children laughing.
I see the Earth become greener.
I want a lovely world.
I am a girl who cares about the environment.

I pretend I am a president.
I feel the world is on my shoulders.
I touch the trees which are going to wither.
I worry the Earth will become a ruin.
I cry for the untidy world.
I am a girl who cares about the environment.

I understand I can’t do many things for the world.
I think all people have responsibility to protect our world.
I dream I have power to save our world.
I try to make the Earth tidier.
I hope we have a perfect world.
I am a girl who cares about our environment.

1F Kristy Lau
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is a school which I study in Hong Kong.

Uniforms are beautifully designed.

I love the friends in Pui Ching.

Chinese and English are the subjects I have to work on.

‘Hi’ is the first word I say to my classmates each day.

I love studying in Pui Ching.

Now I am a member of the choir.

Grateful that I can study in Pui Ching.

1F Supawadee Lok
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is a great school!
United as one,
Isolation never happens!

Come and join us!
Have a wonderful time!
I have known lots of friends,
Never be sad anymore!
Guarantee you’re having fun!

1F Danny Ng
I Am

I am a guy who wants freedom and hope.
I wonder if there’s a dream world for me
I hear the world is calling me.
I see the world is what I have dreamt of... a beautiful world.
I want lots of exciting experience in my life.
I am a guy who wants freedom and hope

I pretend I’m a bird.
I feel free and unleashed.
I touch the comfortable and colourful cloud.
I worry that my free will be taken away again.
I cry I’m scared to be sent back to the cage before I’m free.
I am a guy who wants freedom and hope.

I understand the dream is not going to come true.
I say I will break the cage one day.
I dream I create the world of mine.
I try to imagine it and make it come true but not a dream.
I hope I could break the shackles and chase my dream.
I am a guy who wants freedom and hope.

1F Danny Ng
Pui Ching

Pui Ching is a wonderful school,
Uniforms are neat and tidy,
I love Pui Ching.

Caring is important in Pui Ching,
Happiest school in the universe,
I love my friends and classmates,
Nothing can stop the amazing moments here.
Great teachers and classmates always stand by me!

1F Carlie Tam
This collection of essays is primarily the creative work of our students who, through constant practice of reading and writing as well as shrewd observation of their immediate world, pour out their hearts in the form of short stories, letters, articles and poems.

Such work provides a platform for students to exchange their ideas and share their lives, enabling their communication with greater confidence.

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