



# !nspire

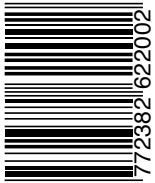
see the world differently



# MAKING WAVES



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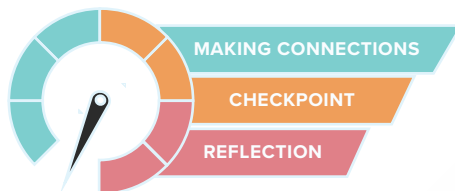
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## SYMBOLS

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# Editor's NOTE



Dear Reader,

'Making Waves' is about being unconventional, whether it involves career decisions, political choices, life options or simply opting for quirky, untrodden paths.

It was by breaking traditional ways that we changed history, for the better. For example, the slavery trade was the norm in many parts of the ancient world such as Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. It took a drastic disruption to the old pattern of thinking to understand that slavery was against basic human rights that efforts were then made to abolish it. If not for a break in convention, slavery would still be considered acceptable, even justified, today. The women's rights movement stirred a lot of controversy in the beginning before society's perceptions were changed, though till today, the fight continues. History shows that it does take following the unconventional path to right the wrongs. In this era, environmental conservation has taken centre stage, with activists like Greta Thunberg questioning world leaders, urging them to action.

Innovations are also a product of unconventional thought. Steve Jobs, the man behind Apple's ultra-popular MacBook, iPhone and iPad, created waves by completely changing how people viewed and used communication devices. Creativity is born when we break away from traditional patterns. Tradition is also broken when unconventional relationships are forged. Sometimes, the most unlikely friendships are formed when traditional barriers to social class and ethnicity are overcome. One such example was the friendship between Queen Victoria of England and Abdul Karim, a prison clerk from India, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a relationship that thrived successfully despite the strong opposition from the royal household. When assumptions are questioned, together with the courage to break conventions, perspectives are broadened and the basic essence of humankind is restored.

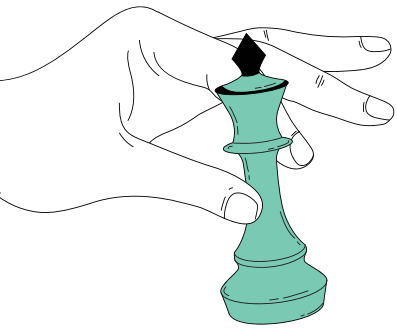
As you read the articles here, question the assumptions and prejudices you may have. You might just gain greater clarity of thought at the end of it.

Warmly,

*Shoba Nair*

Chief Editor

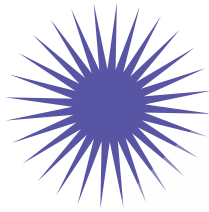
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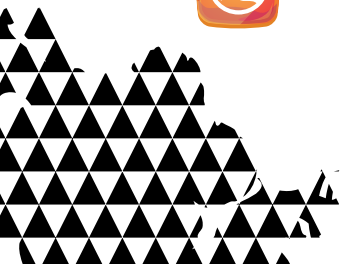
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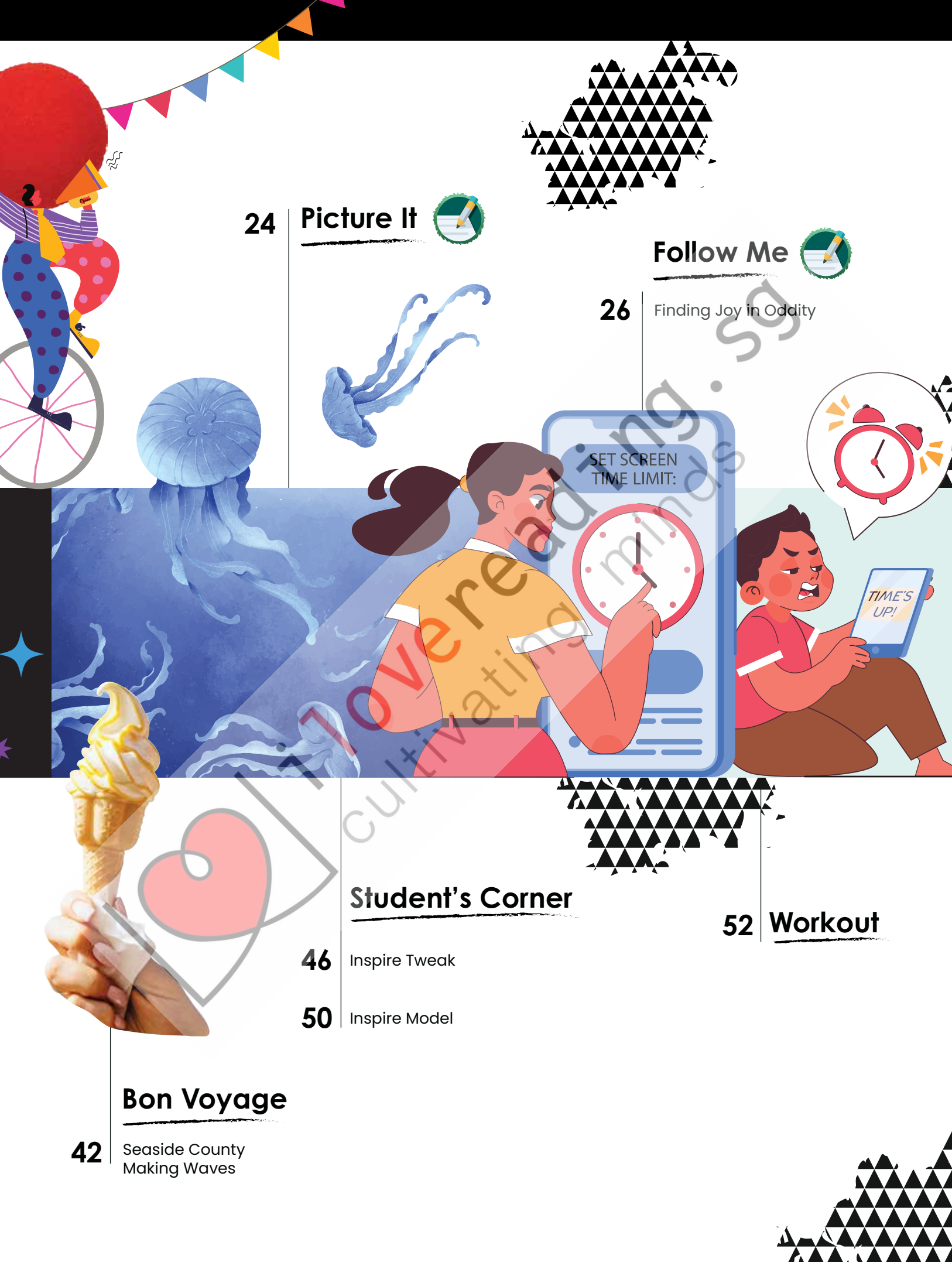
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Seaside County  
Making Waves



# THE BIG Idea



## MAKING WAVES

### UNCONVENTIONAL CONNECTIONS



Unconventional Friendship



Quirky Passions



Unusual Habits & Routines

### INNOVATION



Questioning Assumptions



Breaking Conventions



Tolerance for Failure

### CHANGING HISTORY



The Black Power Movement



Female Empowerment Movement



Environmental Conservation Movement



# Victoria & Abdul

by Norashikin Mohamad



**A librarian talks about a memoir tracing the unconventional friendship between Queen Victoria and her Indian friend, Abdul Karim.**

‘Victoria & Abdul: The True Story of the Queen’s Closest Confidant’, is a memoir masterfully authored by Shrabani Basu, which tells the tale of the friendship between Queen Victoria and Abdul Karim. The year was 1887 – the Queen’s Golden Jubilee – when Abdul Karim assumed the role of a ‘Munshi’ or teacher assigned to Queen Victoria. He instructed her in Urdu and taught her the ways of Indians. This marked the beginning of an unusual relationship between the prison clerk hailing from India and the Queen ruling the British royal court. The significant differences in their backgrounds provided the setting for a story that illustrates an interesting friendship that developed amidst cultural differences and societal resistance.

Besides teaching the Queen the language, Urdu, Karim was also tasked to assist her in understanding Indian

affairs. This was taking place at a time in Victoria’s life when she was experiencing an intense void following the demise of her husband. Thus, while she broadened her cultural knowledge, she remained lonely. Abdul Karim, through his interactions with her, soon became a close companion and confidant. Central to this friendship was the cultural exchange, which enlightened the Queen on Indian cuisine and customs. This broadened her perspective and enabled her to better appreciate the intricacies of a world that was significantly different from hers. As time passed, the bond between ‘Munshi’ and the Queen did not go unnoticed by members of the royal family. In fact, the friendship was subjected to intense scrutiny and opposition from not only the royal household but also the political establishment. Prejudices that existed since time immemorial came to the fore in attempts to sow discord between the Queen and Abdul. British officials feared that an ordinary Indian clerk might exert power over



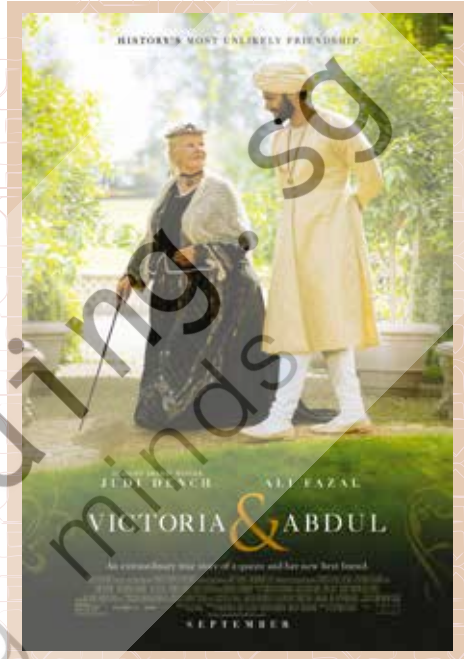


Image Credit: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

the Queen. In this regard, there was significant effort made to discredit Abdul. Despite the turmoil, Queen Victoria and Abdul experienced personal growth that benefitted them in different ways. Victoria, in her later years, became known as someone who sought companionship and understanding. This was in stark contrast to how the world knew her previously, as a stoic and steadfast monarch. Abdul Karim, thrust into the world of royalty, remained unwavering in his ways as he navigated the difficulties brought about by the bias surrounding his role in the Queen's life. Evidently, this memoir illustrates how interpersonal connections play a crucial role in bridging cultural gaps.

A film was made based on the memoir, and was released in 2017. Its cast included Judi Dench as Queen Victoria and Ali Fazal as Abdul Karim. This compelling narrative, brought to life on big screen, drew positive reviews all round. The numerous awards it received, along with the commendable box office figures, were a testament to the success of the film adaptation. This 'print-to-screen' effort widened the outreach, enabling more people to learn about an aspect of Queen Victoria's life that was not extensively publicised.

The story of Victoria and Abdul has a place in the world today, for it sheds light on the preconceived notions surrounding the British Empire and provides insights into how friendship provides the connection that links people, regardless of their background and social class.

# Being First – The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

## Being First is Great



### Steve Jobs & Apple



Steve Jobs transformed the computer and communication industry with his brilliant invention and introduction of the Macintosh, iPod, iPad and iPhone, under Apple. Apple reaped great economic benefits and is still the choice brand for many consumers.

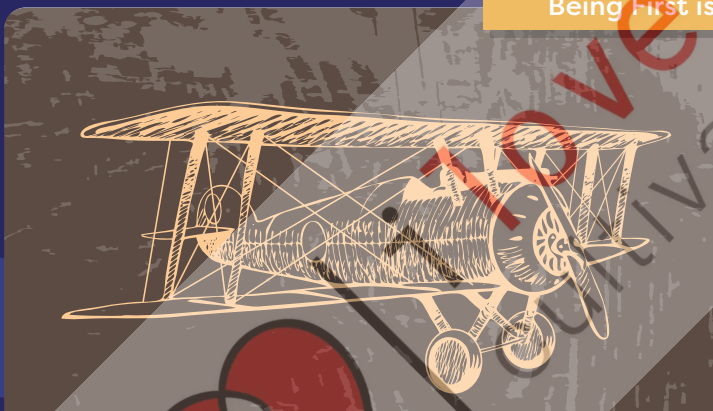


### Mark Zuckerberg & Facebook



Mark Zuckerberg revolutionised the way people connected with one another and shared information, with his social networking platform, Facebook. With no other competitor in the early days, Zuckerberg reaped maximum benefits as Facebook became exceedingly popular among people.

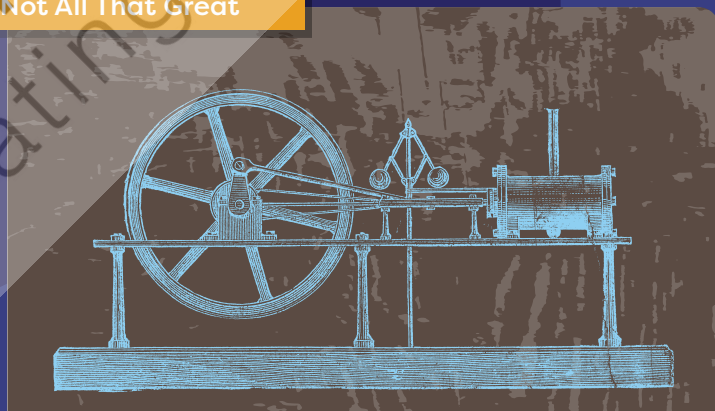
## Being First is Not All That Great



### The Wright Brothers



The Wright brothers, who are well known for inventing and building the world's first aeroplane, faced numerous challenges because they were the first to introduce such an aircraft. There was much doubt and uncertainty in the consumer market and it took a long while for them to market and sell their planes.

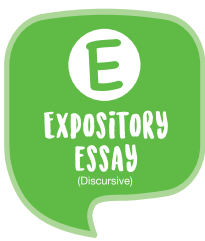


### Robert Fulton



Robert Fulton was the first person to develop a steam-powered boat. Being a pioneer in this area, Fulton faced not only scepticism but also financial hardship. He only gained widespread acceptance and success after a period of time.





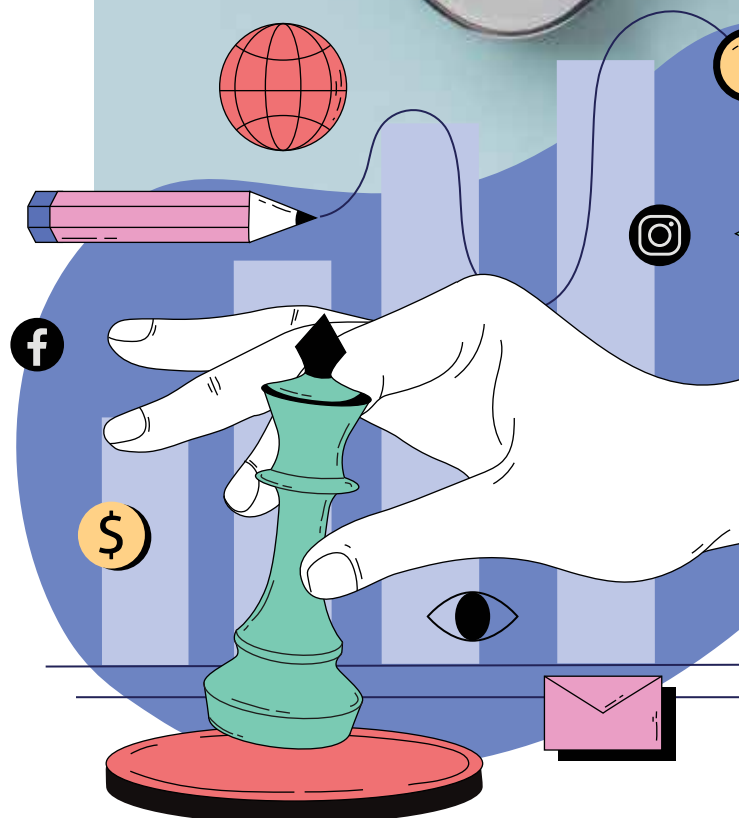
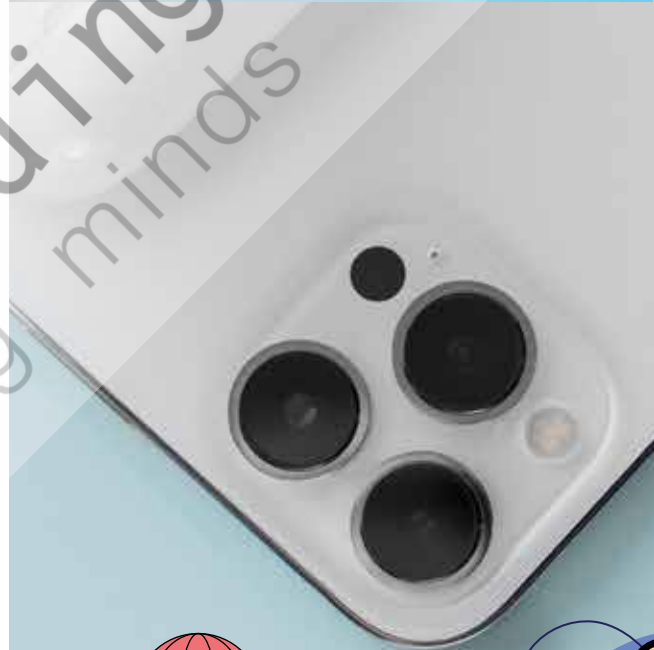
# The Highs and Lows of Being First

**What are the advantages and disadvantages of being the first person to try something?**

*by Sng Ee Ping*

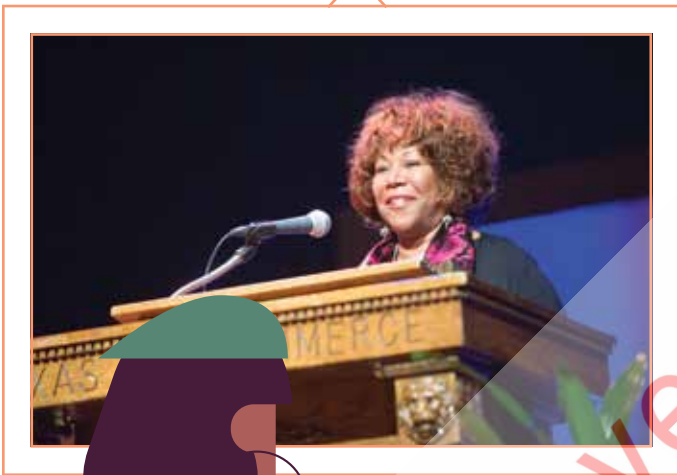
We remember the first man who walked on the moon - Neil Armstrong. However, not many will claim to know the second person on the moon, Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin, who joined Armstrong a mere 19 minutes later.

People usually remember what is new. A new burger flavour in the local fast-food restaurant. An unusual theme park in town. The latest social media or fashion trend. New things grab our attention. When people try something new – introduce a new product, a novel service or take an unusual action – they will either be embraced by fame and wealth or be tangled with disapproval and hostility. To the 'trailblazer, the trendsetter and the pioneer, the advantages can be empowering but the disadvantages can be <sup>2</sup>debilitating as well.





In some games such as chess and Scrabble, the person who executes the first move has the advantage. In life, there are numerous examples of people who soar to fame and gain wealth because they are the first to try something. Consider Steve Jobs who took the world by storm with his invention of the handheld personal computer devices, iPad and iPhone. Today, Apple is the biggest name in the technological industry and its products are status symbols for the present generation. Consider Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph, co-founders of Netflix Inc., who pioneered video streaming services. Today, Netflix is one of the biggest television and movie studios in the world, with more than 200 million subscribers worldwide. The stories of these trailblazers abound with success and significance that the world will remember for a while. That being the first to try something is advantageous, certainly <sup>3</sup>holds water.



*Ruby's trailblazing act led to the desegregation of her school: regardless of the colour of their skin, all students shared classes and recess.*

On a more <sup>4</sup>altruistic note, being the first person to try something new can sometimes impact others in powerful ways, especially if one does something to challenge established norms. In 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges made history as the first Black student to enrol in an all-white elementary school in New Orleans. Barbara Henry was the only teacher who was willing to teach Ruby every subject. Despite the hostility of the masses, both teacher and student persevered. Their determination and fortitude inspired other Black families to enrol their children in the school too. Most importantly, Ruby's trailblazing act later led to the desegregation of her school: regardless of the colour of their skin, all students shared classes and recess. In this case, the first to defy the established norms will be remembered for paving the way to progress for generations to come.



METACOGNITIVE POINT  
**CHECKPOINT**

Do I find the ideas shared so far interesting?

Despite the advantages, most people still prefer to trail behind success stories. Almost certainly, there are disadvantages to being first. People are creatures of habit: they are not easily persuaded to accept something novel. Those who try something first often have a harder time persuading their audience. James Dyson, the inventor of the first cordless and bagless vacuum cleaner, faced countless rejections by manufacturers, including Electrolux, a well-known name in the electronics industry, who felt that it was not possible to sell a vacuum without bags. After overcoming the odds, Dyson vacuum cleaners, with cyclone technology, have successfully become the preferred choice at workplaces and homes today. However, at the same time, other manufacturers are swarming the market with cheaper and better versions of bagless vacuum cleaners such as Shark and Belife. The disadvantage is clear: the trailblazer works tirelessly to overcome the initial obstacles and pave the way for something revolutionary, while the late entrants wait for the opportunity to have a share of the plump pie.

On a similar thread, those who are the first to challenge a societal or cultural norm may face <sup>5</sup>backlash and hostility from those who prefer status quo. History is replete with such examples. Malala Yousafzai was shot by the Taliban when she fought for the rights of education for girls in Pakistan. Mahatma Gandhi was imprisoned for leading the non-violent campaign for the independence of India. How about those who are the first to challenge a bully, the first to speak against social injustices or the first to <sup>6</sup>blow the whistle on a wrongdoing? Pioneers of such changes are usually highly esteemed and remembered fondly, but it may mean they have to put their lives on the line. Few would want to be the first in such scenarios.

The poet Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, 'Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.' To be sure, pioneering something can be fulfilling and rewarding but not many will have the fortitude to handle the odds that come with starting a new path. To this end, I believe it is sufficient that we reach our dream destinations, whether it be taking the well-trodden path or a new path.

## WORD BANK

- 1. trailblazer:**  
the first person to do something or go somewhere, who shows that it is also possible for other people
- 2. debilitating:**  
making someone or something physically weak
- 3. holds water:**  
(of a statement, theory or line of reasoning) appear to be valid, sound or reasonable
- 4. altruistic:**  
willingness to do things that bring advantages to others, even if it results in disadvantages for yourself
- 5. backlash:**  
a strong feeling among a group of people in reaction to a change or recent events in society or politics
- 6. blow the whistle:**  
to tell people publicly about something bad that someone is doing

### References:

1. How Dyson's strategy became its key to success, from Cascade, 22 Feb 2023.
2. Ruby Bridges and Barbara Henry, from Journey To Justice, retrieved from <https://jtojhumanrights.org.uk/ruby-bridges-barbara-henry/>, 18 December 2022.
3. The importance of being first, from Forbes, 26 Dec 2011.

METACOGNITIVE POINT  
**REFLECTION**

What is one takeaway from this article?





WATCH

### Yuri Gagarin – The first man in space



qrs.ly/7zfozja

Source is relevant at the time of publishing

Would you rather be a pioneer or a follower? Why?

Inspire  
See the world differently

## Lang Game

I spy with my little eye... ● ● ●

The following quotes have an error each. Can you spot it?

1. "Italy is not widely thought of as a pioneer of youth clulture in the way, say, the UK is."

~ Giorgio Armani

2. "You'll never be disappointed if you always keep an eye on uncharted territory, where you'll be chalenged and growing and having fun."

~ Kirstie Alley

3. "Rebels and non-conformists are often the pioneers and designers of change."

~ Indira Gandhi

4. "Use your fear... it can take you to the palce where you store your courage."

~ Amelia Earhart

5. "Our life is what our thoughts make it. A man will find that as he altres his thoughts towards things and other people, things and other people will alter towards him."

~ James Allen

Lang Game  
Answers



qrs.ly/scfqrm

# Quirky Habits of Creative Geniuses



## Ludwig Van Beethoven

Beethoven (1770–1827) was a German composer and pianist, and one of the most famous and influential composers in classical music.

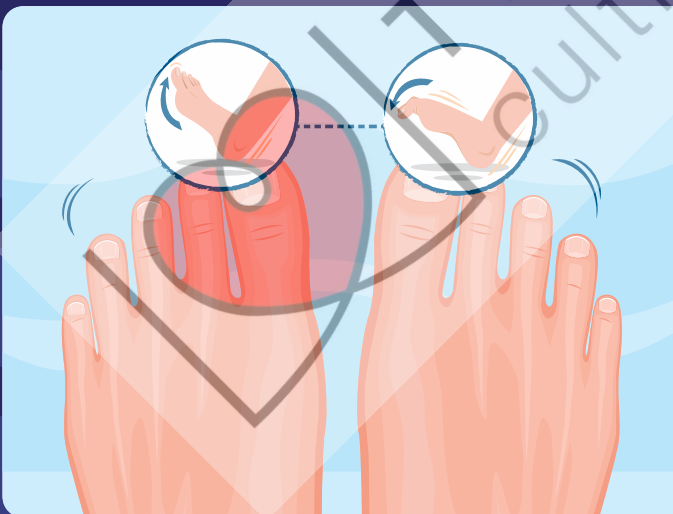


He had two odd habits. For his morning cup of coffee, he was insistent that it be brewed with sixty coffee beans, and he often went to the extent of personally counting them one by one. Another strange routine was his unusual bathing habit. Apparently, during his bath, he would pour large pitchers of water over his hands, shouting out a tune or humming loudly to himself. Then he would pace up and down his room rolling his eyes or staring at an object, occasionally stopping to write something down, before resuming to pour the water and sing. He even got into trouble with his landlord for this weird routine, as sometimes the spilled water would seep through the floor.



## Estee Lauder

Estee Lauder, the lady who built a beauty empire with her eponymous company, had been fascinated by beauty since she was young. As she grew, she took a special interest in the skin of women, and developed an odd habit. She would randomly touch the faces of strangers – those women she met in the elevators or on the street. She felt she could make their skin look better, and would reach out for a cream and dab it here and there, before making them look in the mirror to see how the cream worked for them. That is how Estee Lauder came up with the idea of the High-Touch service for consumers.



## Nikola Tesla

Nikola Tesla is the great inventor of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who has at least 112 patents to his name, and is best known for designing the alternating current electricity supply system.

He had a quirky habit that involved his toes. Every night, he used to repeatedly extend and contract his toes 100 times on each foot. According to him, this practice stimulated his brain cells and helped him think and work better.





# A Man Who Dances to his Own Tune

**Describe a person whom you find odd but creative and interesting.**

*by Joy Chen*

In the heart of my neighbourhood lies a shopping arcade that I pass through almost daily on my commute to and from school. It is here that I often pass by a figure who is both peculiar and captivating. Nestled in a nook between a bakery and a cafe is a street performer, Uncle Bob, who has become a regular fixture along this busy street. With his flamboyant attire and <sup>1</sup>enigmatic aura, he has a magnetic presence that draws one's attention. To many, he might seem like an odd person with his various antics and peculiarities, but to me, he is a wellspring of creativity and intrigue.

The most apparent aspect of his creativity lies in his appearance, which is nothing short of a theatrical spectacle. He is often adorned in his signature coat, a multi-coloured patchwork quilt emblematic of his <sup>2</sup>sartorial choices. He is fashionably fearless

as he mixes and matches various patterns, colours and textures to great dramatic effect. On each arm dangles a bevy of accessories as well – from wooden beads and jade bracelets to other assorted trinkets. Overall, he fancies bold, flashy colours, and the more they seem to clash, the prouder he appears of the visual cacophony he has concocted. Most distinctly, his face is always painted with a bright smile, a rare sight along the busy streets where everyone is rushing to and fro in their hectic lives.

What I admire most about this street performer is his unwavering dedication to his craft as a street musician. When I first saw Uncle Bob, he was only playing a humble guitar, but over the years he has expanded his repertoire to incorporate various other instruments such as a harmonica, a flute and a keyboard into his act.



*Far from catchy beats one could bob the head to, his tunes consist of many discordant harmonies and awkward rhythms.*

However, the strange thing is that none of his songs sound anything like those one would hear on the radio. Far from catchy beats one could bob the head to, his tunes consist of many<sup>3</sup>discordant harmonies and awkward rhythms. Although his music may not always sound pleasant, he performs with a sincerity that is both infectious and inspiring. His willingness to improvise and improve also encourages me to adopt the same attitude towards whatever I am learning, whether in my studies or hobbies. I also appreciate how he plays not for money or fame, but for the sheer joy of expressing himself. This philosophy of pursuing art unabashedly motivates me to also cultivate my artistic passions without reservation.

METACOGNITIVE POINT  
**CHECKPOINT**

What are my thoughts about the character so far?





What do you think is the general public perception of people such as the man who is described in this essay? Why do you think this is so?



Interestingly, when not performing, Uncle Bob exhibits a very different persona. To the audience, he is an excellent entertainer – boisterous and outgoing – as he banter with the crowd and solicits donations. Yet when I occasionally spot him around the neighbourhood doing ordinary, mundane things, he comes across as surprisingly <sup>4</sup>nondescript in his mannerisms as well as dressing. I have seen him sitting with friends at the coffee shop, quietly listening with a mild-mannered demeanour. Sometimes he would be having a meal with his wife and young daughter, and he would be seen patiently coaxing the <sup>5</sup>belligerent toddler to eat her vegetables. These glimpses into his personal life reveal a more placid aspect of his character, proving that there is often more to a person than meets the eye.

In a world governed by rules and convention, Uncle Bob is an anomaly in his wholehearted pursuit of creativity. His idiosyncratic lifestyle may be perceived as odd by some, and perhaps even frowned upon by others, but to me, he represents the essence of what it means to live authentically. Whenever I pass by him, I am reminded that it is our individual quirks and passions that make us unique. His performances inspire me to embrace my own creativity and live a life unbound by convention.

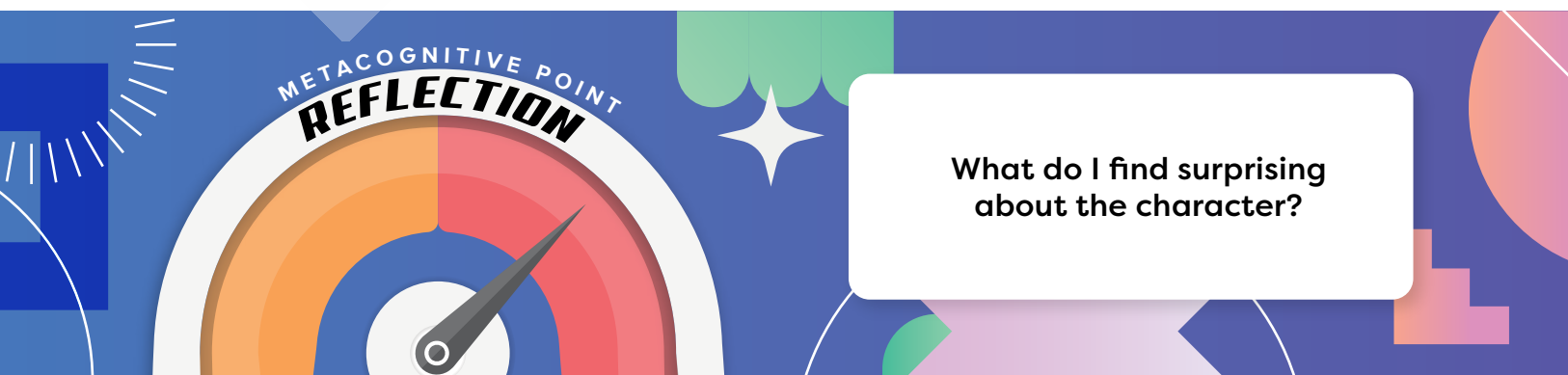
**WORD BANK**

1. **enigmatic:**  
mysterious and difficult to understand
2. **sartorial:**  
relating to clothes
3. **discordant:**  
combining with other things in a way that is strange or unpleasant
4. **nondescript:**  
having no interesting or unusual features or qualities
5. **belligerent:**  
aggressive and unfriendly



METACOGNITIVE POINT  
**REFLECTION**

What do I find surprising about the character?





# What are some problems you may face due to technology?

## Addiction to Social Media



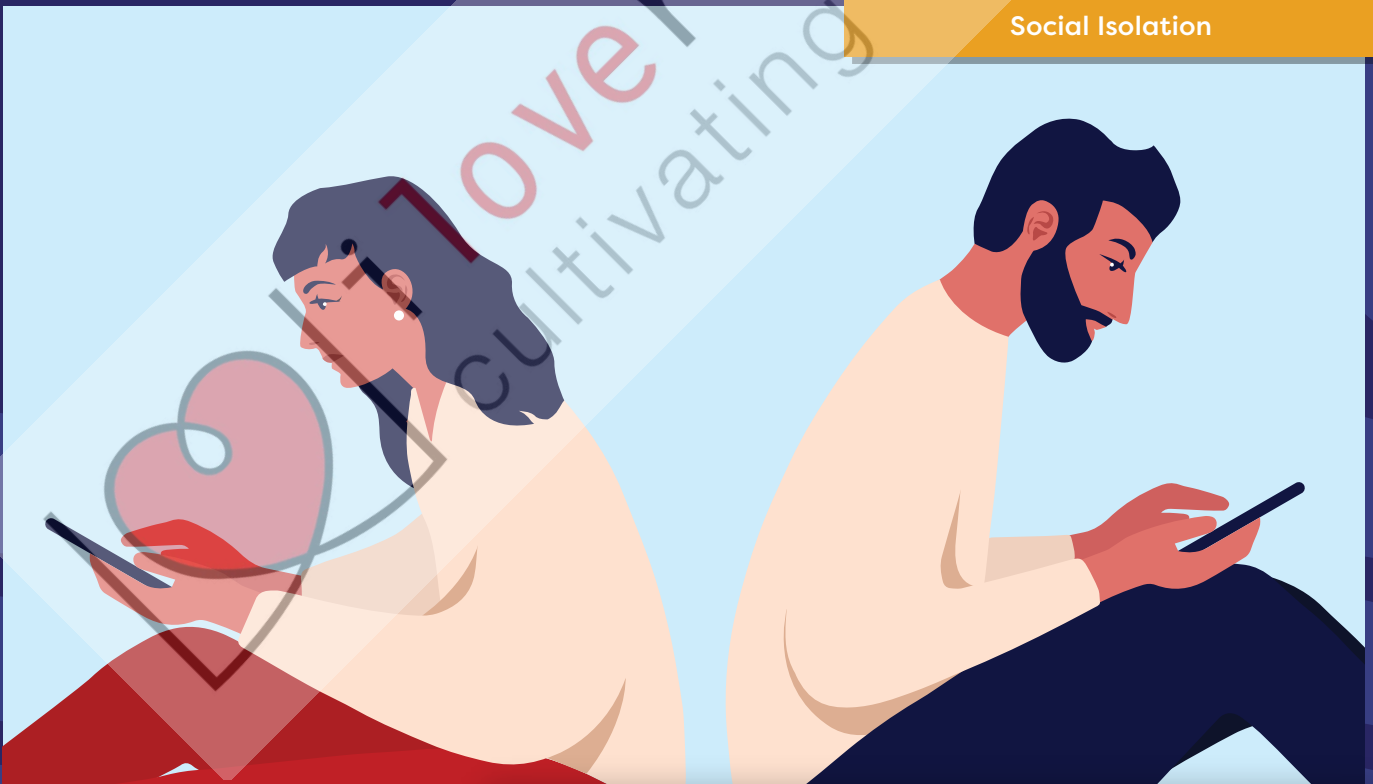
## Overdependence on Technology for Tasks



Constant Distraction



Social Isolation



What are some problems I have encountered with technology?

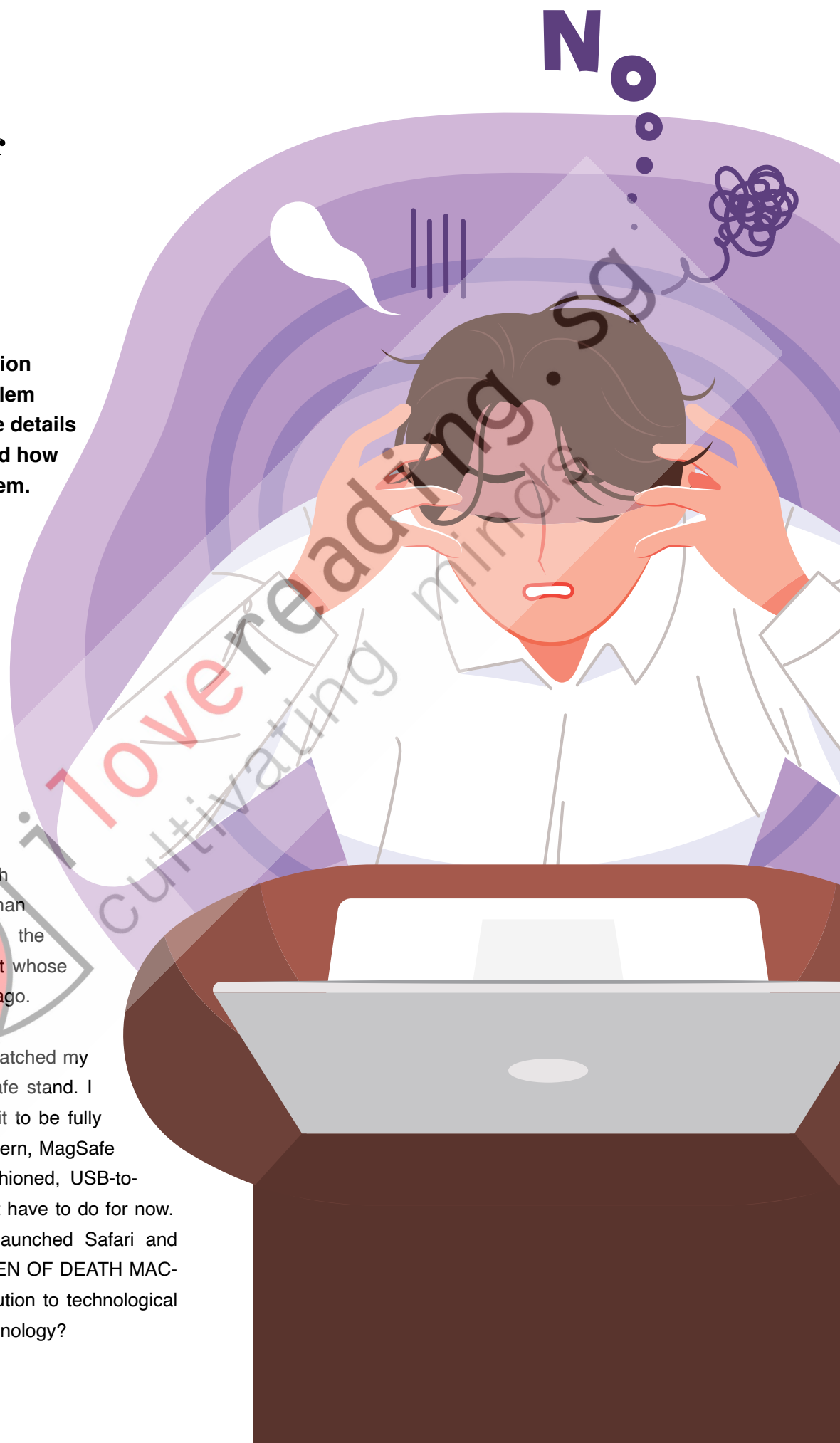
# Apple of My Eye

by Jeremy Au Yong

**Write about an occasion when you had a problem with technology. Give details of what happened and how you solved the problem.**

‘There is no darkness but ig...’ As soon as I hit the ‘n’ key, my world went dark. Admittedly, I was exaggerating, but my MacBook Air was my world and now its screen had suddenly gone dark. The dreaded Black Screen of Death was a fate worse than death, especially in the middle of an assignment whose deadline was two hours ago.

Screaming inwardly, I snatched my iPhone 14 off its MagSafe stand. I had no time to wait for it to be fully charged the slower, modern, MagSafe way. The faster, old-fashioned, USB-to-Lightning way would just have to do for now. I shoved the plug in, launched Safari and Googled ‘BLACK SCREEN OF DEATH MACBOOK’. What better solution to technological problems than more technology?





'[...] press and hold the power button for about 10 seconds [...]

Obediently, I pressed the MacBook button and set the countdown timer on my iPhone's Clock app. Nothing.

'[...] start up from macOS Recovery, then use Disk Utility [...]

Again, nothing.

'[...] see How to repair a Mac disk with [...]

Still nothing.

As I stared into the 'unyielding blackness of the screen, I could feel a supernova of anxiety beginning to form within the black hole of my despair. I wanted to externalise my inward scream, but I did not want to distress Letitia (the helper) and Mr Meow (the pet). No one else was home to come running if I screamed anyway; Mom was out shopping with Sis, and Dad was on a business trip to God-only-knew-where. Still, why should I be adrift in the darkness of cyberspace all alone? I decided to call the next best thing to family: the Apple Support hotline.

METACOGNITIVE POINT  
**CHECKPOINT**

What do I like or dislike  
about the writing so far?

*I had found the perfect target audience for the vocalisation of my silent scream.*



## WORD BANK

- 1. unyielding:**  
resolute
- 2. give my eyeteeth:**  
to be willing to give up anything of value to obtain something
- 3. sagacity:**  
foresight; ability to make good judgements
- 4. incredulity:**  
the state of being unable or willing to believe something

‘For technical support, warranty questions, repairs and replacement status, please press 2 [...]’ My MacBook Air’s warranty expired years ago and it certainly was in need of repair, although I would <sup>2</sup>give my eyeteeth to replace it with the latest MacBook Pro (preferably in Space Grey).

‘Please hold while we transfer you to technical support...’ At last, help was at hand.

‘Have you tried switching your laptop off and on again?’

Such ingenuity! Such <sup>3</sup>sagacity! Now, why had I not thought of such a brilliant plan myself? I had found the perfect target audience for the vocalisation of my silent scream. Like an opera prima donna preparing for her aria, I filled my lungs with air and belted out a crescendo of <sup>4</sup>incredulity, frustration and sarcasm.

I felt a lot better. With newfound clarity and calm, I placed my iPhone back on its MagSafe stand and closed my MacBook. Why let one rotten Apple ruin the entire basket of my weekend? When Mom got back home later, I would beg her for a fresh MacBook (Pro, hopefully). In the meantime, there was my homework assignment to tackle. I tore off a fresh sheet of A4 foolscap, scrambled to find a ballpoint pen and tried to recall the essay that ChatGPT had written for me. Sometimes, a high-tech problem calls for a low-tech solution.

What is your opinion of the character here?



Writing Tips



qrs.ly/r5fu6bk

METACOGNITIVE POINT  
**REFLECTION**

Do I find anything surprising about the writer’s reaction here?



The following are words with TECH in them. Can you identify them using the clues?

1. To echo more than.

		T	E	C	H	
--	--	---	---	---	---	--

2. A summary of the principles of the Christian religion in the form of questions and answers, used for religious instruction.

		T	E	C	H		
--	--	---	---	---	---	--	--

3. Use of living parts such as cells or bacteria in industry and technology.

			T	E	C	H
--	--	--	---	---	---	---

4. An institution offering full- and part-time courses, especially vocational courses, in many fields at below degree standard.

			T	E	C	H		
--	--	--	---	---	---	---	--	--

5. Someone who does not like new technology such as computers or mobile phones, and is afraid to use it.

T	E	C	H						
---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

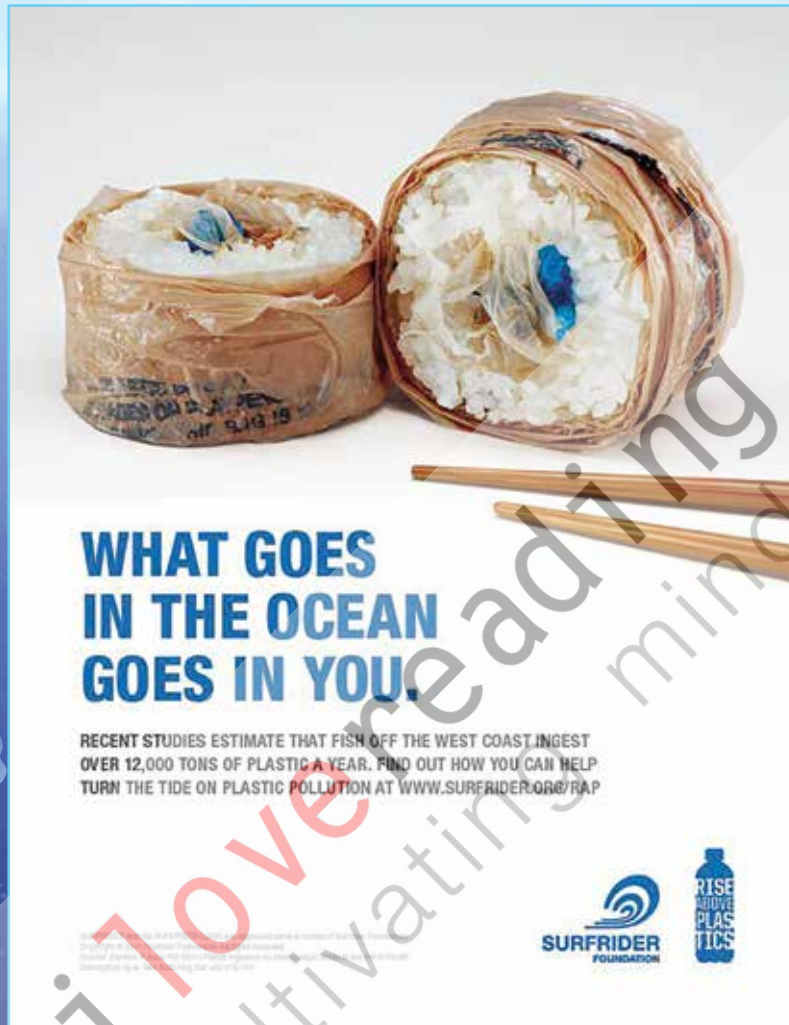
Lang Game  
Answers



qrs.ly/scfqrm



**Text 1** is taken from an online campaign on marine pollution.



(source from [www.surfridervancouver.org](http://www.surfridervancouver.org))

**Text 2** is an excerpt of a blog by a marine biologist.

When I became a marine biologist, traditional fishermen taught me to humbly love and respect our ocean, which nurtures the fish to ensure a sustainable livelihood for all. This notion of respect has largely faded, and our ocean is now fragile and highly vulnerable due to all kinds of human damage. As an active scuba diving instructor, I always emphasise to my students the moral ethics of respect for our aquatic environment. Most people believe that marine pollution is mainly the result of industrial waste and man-made negligence; they often forget that human ignorance causes more marine pollution than industrial waste. Today our oceans have been turned into a huge open dump where plastic discarded by humanity accumulates.

(modified from *Asian Development Blog*, Patrick Safran)

# Unusual Passions

## Competitive Eating



Takeru Kobayashi, a Japanese competitive eating champion, has had a penchant for competitive eating since he was a teen. He is known as the 'godfather of competitive eating' and has won various competitions on gluttony. He set his first record in 2001 when he ate 50 hot dogs in 12 minutes at the Nathan's Coney Island Hot Dog Eating Contest, and then went on to break his own record three times in the competitions that followed after that.

## Toy Collection



Leonardo DiCaprio, one of the most popular actors in Hollywood, has an interesting passion – he loves rare, vintage toys. Being a huge Star Wars fan, he has a huge collection of original Star Wars toys from the 1970s and 1980s, and keeps them under lock and key. DiCaprio also collects figurines of characters from the films, He-Man, The A-Team and Planet of the Apes. He even auctions some of his toys for charity.

## Organising



Some of us are often nagged at for not keeping our rooms tidy, and who love the organised mess. Yet there are some whose dream is to organise and tidy the space they occupy. Marie Kondo, a famous professional personal organiser who even has her own television show, loved tidying up as a young girl. She says that decluttering and organising gives her joy, so she decided to make that passion her job.



# Finding Joy in Oddity

By Neha Thantry

**1** As I wandered around my community centre's open house, searching for something to fill the seemingly endless desert of school holidays that stretched before me, I found myself standing before an activity room that was decorated to resemble a circus tent, marked by the sign, 'Circus Workshop: Unleash Your Inner Clown!' The room seemed to shimmer with the allure of the unconventional, pulsing with an 'eclectic energy that drew me in.

**2** Vibrant hues of reds, blues and yellows adorned the walls, transforming the space to a sensory portal into the whimsical world of the circus. A <sup>2</sup>motley collection of oversized shoes, colourful wigs and bulbous red noses on a table in the corner invited participants to embrace their clown alter egos. The sound of uninhibited laughter echoed within the room, creating an atmosphere that felt simultaneously bizarre yet cosy.

**3** Circling the room, I encountered a diverse group of individuals, each animatedly engaged in mastering the nuances of clowning. Some were practising juggling, their eyes fixed on the rhythmic dance of coloured balls in the air. Others navigated the fine line between hilarity and absurdity in perfecting <sup>3</sup>slapstick routines, their contagious laughter filling the room like a joyful symphony. Amidst the swirl of eccentricity, I hesitated, observing the whirlwind of activities around me, not fully participating for fear of embarrassing myself. However, as I tentatively joined the ranks of budding clowns, the initial awkwardness gave way to an unexpected sense of liberation. The more I surrendered to the <sup>4</sup>whimsy of the workshop, the more I felt a weight lift off my shoulders. A fellow participant, seemingly impressed by my novice attempts at juggling and slapstick, approached with a wide grin.

*I found genuine enjoyment in learning new tricks and putting together unconventional outfits...*







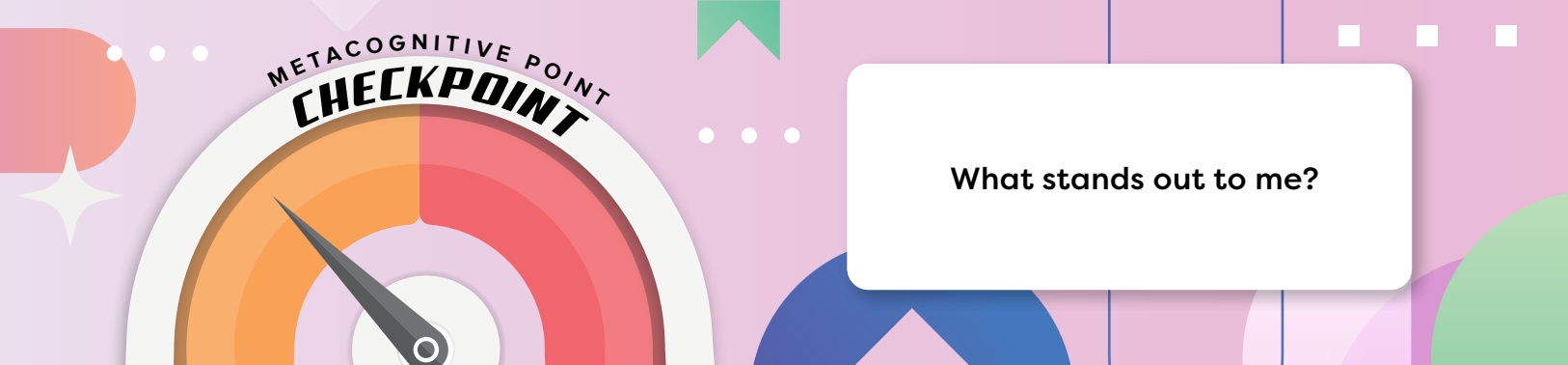
4  
 “You’ve got a natural flair for this, Jamie! You should  
 seriously consider showcasing your clowning skills in the 30  
 talent show the community centre is hosting next month!”  
 he exclaimed, his eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. The mere  
 thought of performing as a clown on a stage sent shivers  
 down my spine, but his words also planted a seed of excite-  
 ment within me. 35

5  
 In the days after the workshop, my mind oscillated be-  
 tween wanting to embrace this newfound passion and the  
 haunting fear of ridicule. The idea of becoming a clown  
 seemed 5ludicrous in the eyes of my friends and family, their  
 raised eyebrows and stifled chuckles making me reconsid- 40  
 er this hobby. However, amidst the internal turmoil, I knew  
 that I found genuine enjoyment in learning new tricks and  
 putting together unconventional outfits. Thus, the decision  
 to perform in the talent show became a daring venture into  
 the unknown, a chance to defy expectations and explore the 45  
 uncharted territories of self-expression.

6  
 Leading up to the talent show, I immersed myself in the  
 world of clowning, my small room transformed into a make-  
 shift rehearsal space. I crafted a short slapstick routine, set  
 to music, and even taught myself some novice magic tricks 50  
 to sprinkle an extra layer of enchantment into my act. Even  
 the exorbitant price tags on commercial clown outfits did not  
 discourage me. Armed with scrap fabrics, old clothes and a  
 basic sewing kit, I set out to make my own distinctive cos-  
 tume. Hours melted away as I stitched and snipped, piecing 55  
 together an outfit that mirrored the kaleidoscope of this new  
 persona. Amidst my efforts to perfect the act, having to de-  
 cline invitations from friends and field queries from family be-  
 came a relentless reminder of my divergence from the norm,  
 fuelling a sense of isolation. 60

METACOGNITIVE POINT  
**CHECKPOINT**

What stands out to me?





7 The day of the talent show arrived, accompanied by a swell of nerves that threatened to make me abandon the endeavour altogether. The long shadows of the dim backstage lights felt all-consuming as I started to wonder if I was in over my head and about to make a complete fool of myself. However, as I adorned my handcrafted costume and caked my face with clownish makeup, my anxiety strangely gave way to a liberating sense of anticipation to step out of the familiar contours of myself and allow the persona of the clown to take centre stage.

When I finally stepped onto the stage, the initial response was a mixture of scattered, incredulous laughter and the hurried footsteps of children retreating in apprehension. For a fleeting second, self-doubt gnawed at the edges of my confidence. Then, the first notes of circus music filled the air, prompting me to throw myself into the performance with an unbridled fervour, the routine I had practised for weeks on end coming to me like second nature.

9 85 The audience, initially resistant to the unconventional spectacle before them, soon became captive to the whimsical world I inhabited. Laughter, genuine and unrestrained, began to resonate within the auditorium, dispelling the earlier shock. As I pulled out a string of hankies from my sleeve and pretended to trip over my  
90 oversized shoes, timed perfectly to match the rhythm of the song, I witnessed those once-sceptical faces transform into expressions of joy and wonder.

As I took my final bow and basked in the applause that thundered through the auditorium, the isolation, the doubt and the  
95 sacrifices faded into insignificance. The happiness I had imparted became the ultimate reward, proving that with the right amount of confidence and determination, even the most peculiar-seeming hobby could create moments of magic.

**WORD BANK**

1. **eclectic:**  
including many different types, methods or styles
2. **motley:**  
consisting of many different types, parts or colours that do not seem to belong together
3. **slapstick:**  
a type of humorous acting in which the actors behave in a silly way, such as by throwing things or falling over
4. **whimsy:**  
unusual, funny and pleasant ideas or qualities
5. **ludicrous:**  
foolish or unreasonable and deserving to be laughed at
6. **fervour:**  
intense and passionate feeling



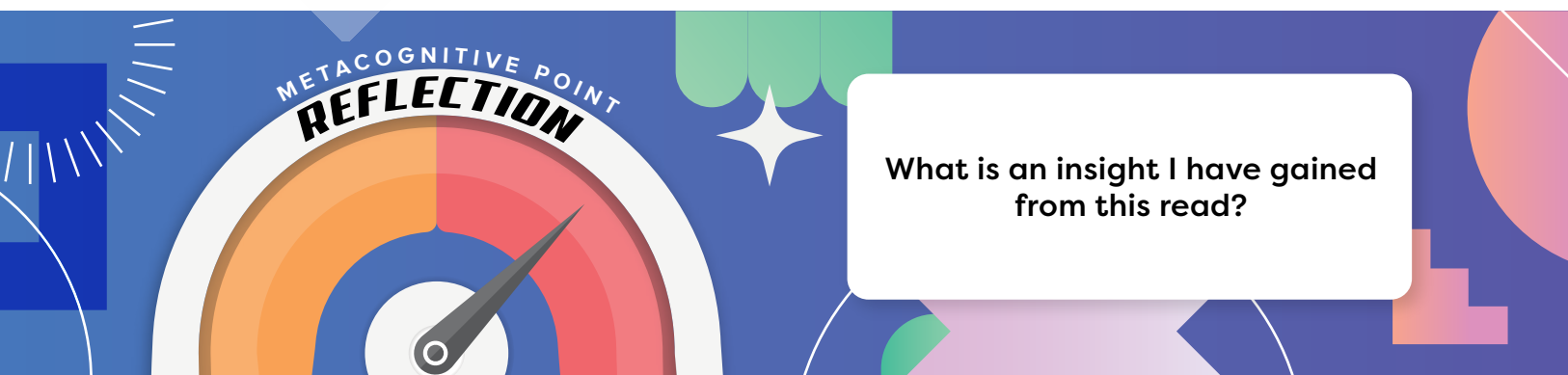
**Christoph Niemann: How to Overcome the 3 Fears Every Creative Faces**



Source is relevant at the time of publishing

**METACOGNITIVE POINT REFLECTION**

What is an insight I have gained from this read?



# FIT AND HEALTHY WEEK



## Fitness Trends

Looking to improve your physical health? Join a group of enthusiasts and embark on a journey of spins and hoops!

- Participate in aerial yoga classes and learn how to keep your balance while twirling on hoops suspended in air.
- Attend spin classes and build your stamina through cycling on exercise bicycles, accompanied by popular tunes.
- Get certified as a health ambassador through a series of tests.



## Mindfulness Trends

Looking for quiet time to decompress and get in touch with your inner self? Be part of a group that champions mindfulness.

- Learn ways of incorporating activities such as yoga and meditation into your lifestyle to improve mental health.
- Attend talks and courses to broaden your knowledge on ways to incorporate mindfulness in your daily life.
- Organise a mindfulness workshop to encourage others to adopt such practices.



## Eating Healthy Trends

Looking for ways to enjoy food without the guilt? Eating healthy is the way to go!

- Adopt eating guides to develop a healthy diet.
- Be alert to opportunities to put into practice healthy eating habits, both at home and in public eating places.
- Manage eating routines for long-term benefits.



## The Question *by* Norashikin Mohamad

You should look at the information on the previous page. Study the information carefully and plan your answer before beginning to write.

Your school is organising a 'Fit and Healthy Week' to encourage students to adopt healthy habits. As the Fit and Healthy representative of your level, you have been tasked by the principal to give a speech to the Secondary Two cohort on how to keep healthy. You have come across an information sheet containing details on trends that support healthy living, and after much consideration, you decide on a trend that you feel is suitable.

Write your speech, stating clearly:

- which trend you have chosen
- why you think your chosen trend is a good choice
- how you think the students can benefit from developing healthy habits.

You may add any other details you think will be helpful.

Write your speech in clear, accurate English. Your tone should be persuasive, showing your conviction that your chosen trend will encourage the students to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

You should **use your own words** as much as possible.

Writing  
Tips



[qrs.ly/kdfu6bm](https://qrs.ly/kdfu6bm)

# The Speech

Good morning, friends. As part of our school's 'Fit and Healthy Week' programme, I hope to share with you a trend that I feel is worth adopting in order to lead a healthy lifestyle.

It is said that a healthy mind makes for a healthy body, and there are many ways in which we can develop both our minds and bodies. Some of you may have read about fitness programmes that focus on developing our physical wellbeing while others are aware of activities that support our mental health. One trend that I feel would help us maintain both our physical and mental wellbeing is eating healthy foods. As a start, let us recall the guide to healthy meals that we learnt during Food and Consumer Education lessons, aptly named 'My Healthy Plate'. You would agree that it is a visual guide that is easy to remember and follow. The label 'Quarter, Quarter, Half' helps us recall the right proportions of each food group that makes for a well-balanced meal, and this would come in handy each time we decide on our food choices. We are also aware of the different foods in each group, having learnt about this in school. For example, oatmeal and brown rice are wholegrains while meat and eggs are sources of proteins. Let us not forget to include our fruits and vegetables. I feel that making a conscious attempt to develop healthy eating habits is not difficult as we are armed with the knowledge of ways to do so. In fact, it is like putting into practice what we have learnt in class, taking our learning beyond the four walls of the classroom!

At this juncture, I would like all of us to think of the last time we purchased a meal. Do you recall reading posters containing information on healthy meals? Be it at the hawker centre or a fast food joint, there are suggestions on how we can substitute certain food items for others so as to increase the nutritional content of our meals. For example, as you well know, we can replace French fries with a garden salad or a corn cup at the popular fast food chain, McDonald's. We can also request for less salt to be added to the local dishes we purchase at hawker centres. These options are made available as part of our government's initiatives to encourage people to eat healthy. This trend is gaining traction among the young and the young-at-heart, so why not be a part of it? There is little to lose and much to gain by being more conscious of what we consume daily, so, let us start cultivating healthy eating habits!

Eating healthy is a long-term investment that will bode well for our bodies. A balanced diet rich in essential nutrients is vital for proper bodily functions. We need energy to go about completing our day-to-day activities, and this is where our digestive system plays an important role in ensuring that what we consume is broken down and duly absorbed to provide our organs with the fuel they need to work well. Our bodies also rely on other systems. For example, the immune system is essential in helping us stay healthy by combating illnesses, and the respiratory system ensures that our organs receive sufficient oxygen to function properly. These would not be possible if we do not consume nutrient-rich foods, and thus a healthy diet is essential in ensuring that our bodies have sustained energy for us to remain productive. It also reduces fatigue, and I am sure that we would appreciate this very much, particularly since we have hectic schedules to keep.

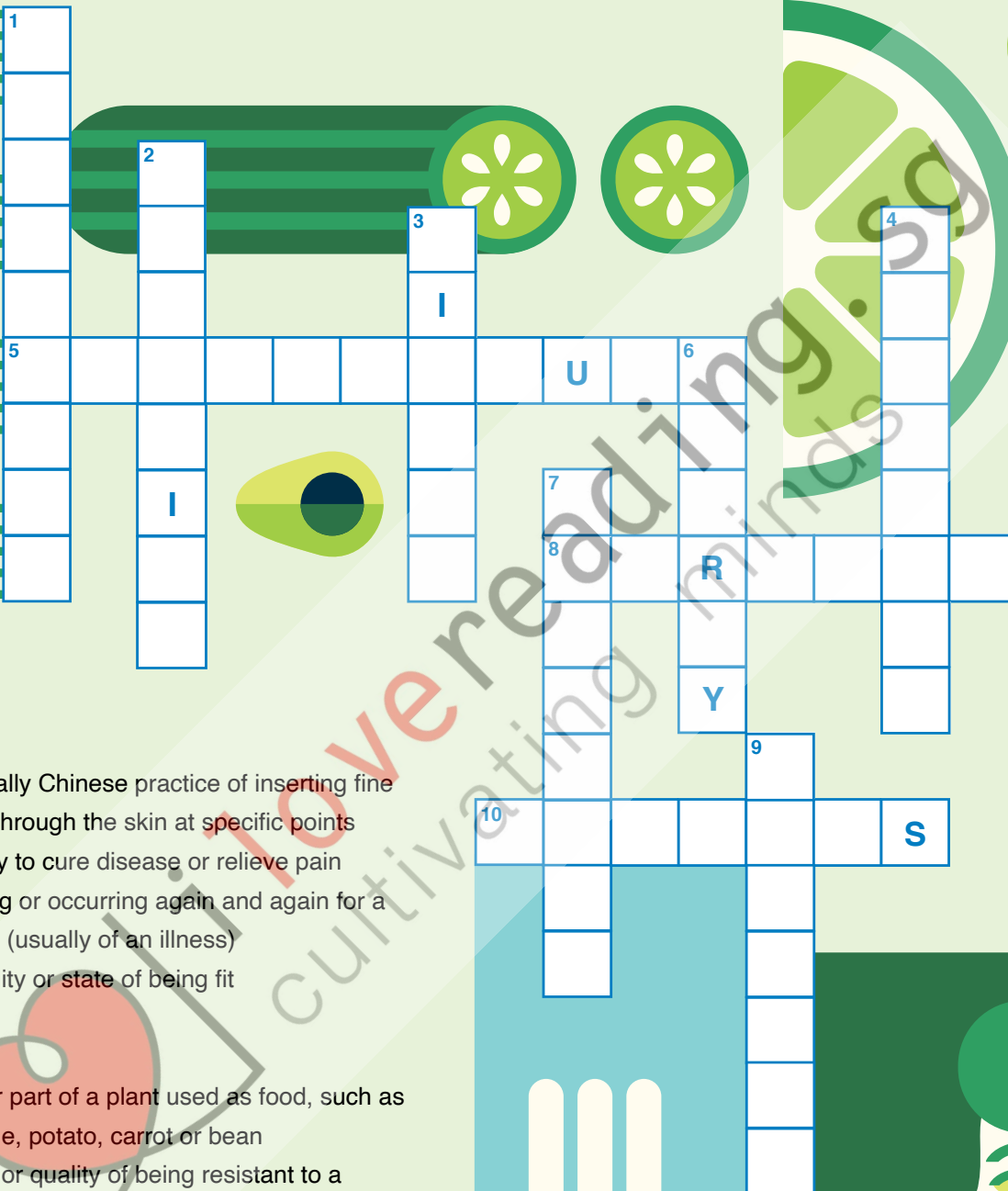
Eating healthy does not only bring about benefits in the immediate future, but also in the long run. As we grow older, the nutritional needs of our bodies change, so cultivating healthy eating habits since young will enable us to reap its rewards in our later years. For one, a nutritious diet supports ageing by maintaining cognitive function. It also promotes skin health. I am sure that we want to look good and remain alert, even in old age, so let's start eating healthy today! Our bodies and minds will thank us for it in the years to come.

I hope that I have piqued your interest and enthused you to look into ways of cultivating healthy eating habits. Remember, we reap what we sow, so grab that garden salad now!

## Lang Game

Crossword ● ● ●

The following are clues to words related to health. Happy sleuthing!

**Across:**

5. an originally Chinese practice of inserting fine needles through the skin at specific points especially to cure disease or relieve pain
8. continuing or occurring again and again for a long time (usually of an illness)
10. the quality or state of being fit

**Down:**

1. a plant or part of a plant used as food, such as a cabbage, potato, carrot or bean
2. the state or quality of being resistant to a particular infectious disease or pathogen
3. a muscle having two heads
4. activity requiring physical effort, carried out to sustain or improve health and fitness
6. vigorous exertion of power: usually regarded as the capacity for doing work
7. a situation in which something is happening or a lot of things are being done
9. of, relating to, caused by, or controlled by genes

Lang Game  
Answers



qrs.ly/scfqrm

Read Aloud



qrs.ly/11fsezq

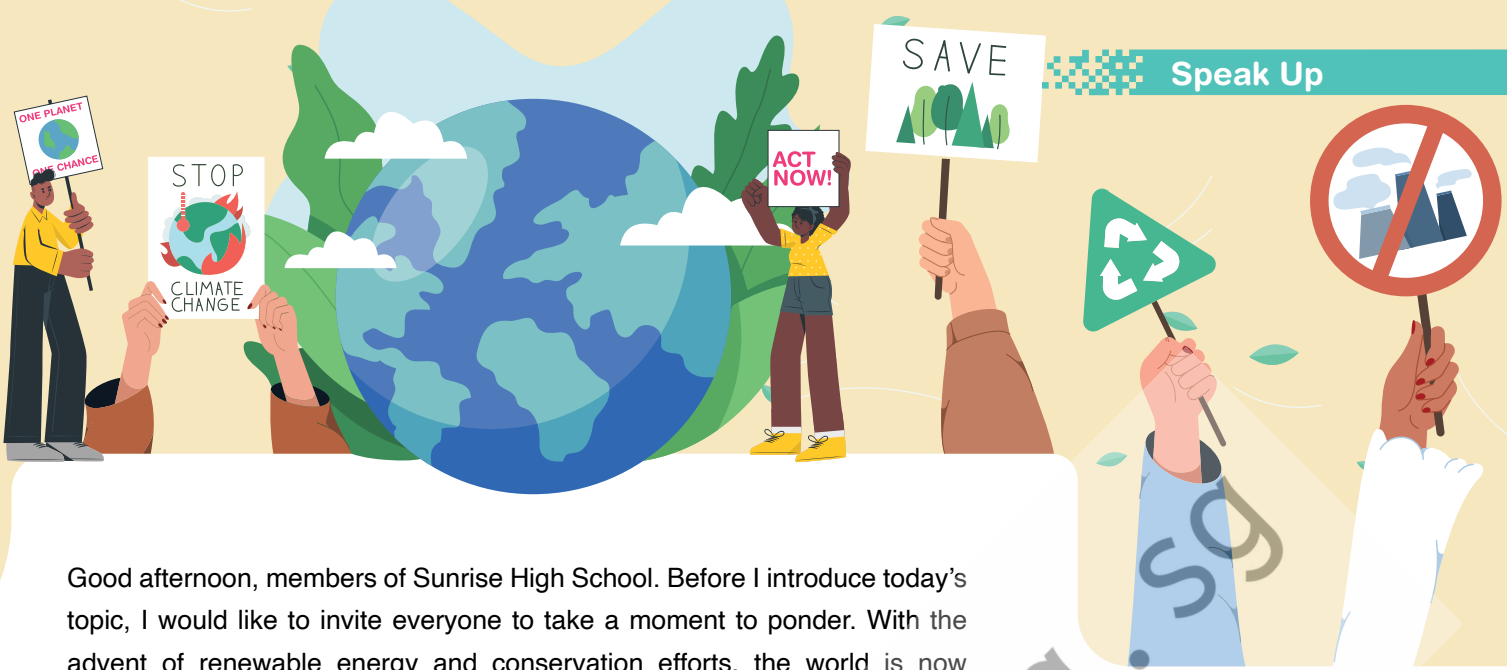
# Making Waves in *Environmental Conservation*

by Rebecca Yap

**A student talks about global initiatives in environmental conservation efforts.**







Good afternoon, members of Sunrise High School. Before I introduce today's topic, I would like to invite everyone to take a moment to ponder. With the advent of renewable energy and conservation efforts, the world is now <sup>1</sup>pivoting to one of greater awareness and sensitivity to the needs of Mother Earth. Technology-laden processes and environments will soon be driven by sustainable energy – the future is now.

To begin, the younger generation has set the stage for spearheading these conservation efforts. One example is Greta Thunberg, who has called for tangible actions and accountability of world leaders to transition to renewable energy. She <sup>2</sup>orchestrated public protests known as 'Fridays for Future' or FFF, which involved students skipping lessons on Fridays to take a stand for the climate. The movement's demands centred on renewable energy, preservation of fossil fuels and assistance provided to <sup>3</sup>climate refugees. Despite the naysayer's critiques of her naivety, her <sup>4</sup>valiance has garnered international support, with more than 100 countries participating in the protests.

Her conviction lies in her message to the world: "Once we start to act, hope is everywhere. So instead of looking for hope, look for action. Then, and only then, hope will come."

One area where countries have begun making viable plans is through The Paris Agreement, which entered into force in 2016. It is a legally binding international treaty targeting climate change, aiming to keep global warming well below two degrees Celsius. This involves an international commitment to reduce greenhouse emissions, with a concerted effort to transit away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy.

These global and social initiatives indicate a <sup>5</sup>propitious change in how we perceive our precious climate. Whether they are <sup>6</sup>helmed by the youth or major governments and organisations, the message is clear. In the coming years, may we also contribute to these causes with upright intentions, for the world we live in is our responsibility to bear.

### WORD BANK

1. **pivoting:**  
changing opinions and decisions so that they are different from what they were before
2. **orchestrated:**  
planned and organised something carefully
3. **climate refugees:**  
people who are forced to leave their home country or area because climate change has made it impossible for them to continue to live or work there
4. **valiance:**  
bravery or determination, especially when things are difficult
5. **propitious:**  
likely to result in success, or showing signs of success
6. **helmed:**  
managed

## Talking Point



[qrs.ly/13fozjr](https://qrs.ly/13fozjr)

Talking  
Point

## Planned Response

How does being innovative benefit an individual in their everyday life?

## Spoken Interaction

1. Do you think anyone can be innovative, as long as they try hard enough?
2. What are some opportunities schools and society can provide to help individuals hone their creativity and innovation? How effective do you think they are?

Suggested  
Response



[qrs.ly/blfsezg](https://qrs.ly/blfsezg)

# Arganre Me

The following sentences are related to innovation but the words have been jumbled up.  
Can you arrange them to make sense?

(clue: first and last words are indicated)

1. all                      ages.                      Innovators                      come                      in

---

2. innovations                      Many                      built                      were                      past                      upon                      failures.

---

3. recent                      not                      is                      concept.                      Innovation                      a

---

4. creativity.                      on                      Daydreaming                      positive                      can                      effects                      have                      your

---

5. Innovation                      thinking.                      from                      stems                      creative

---

Lang Game  
Answers

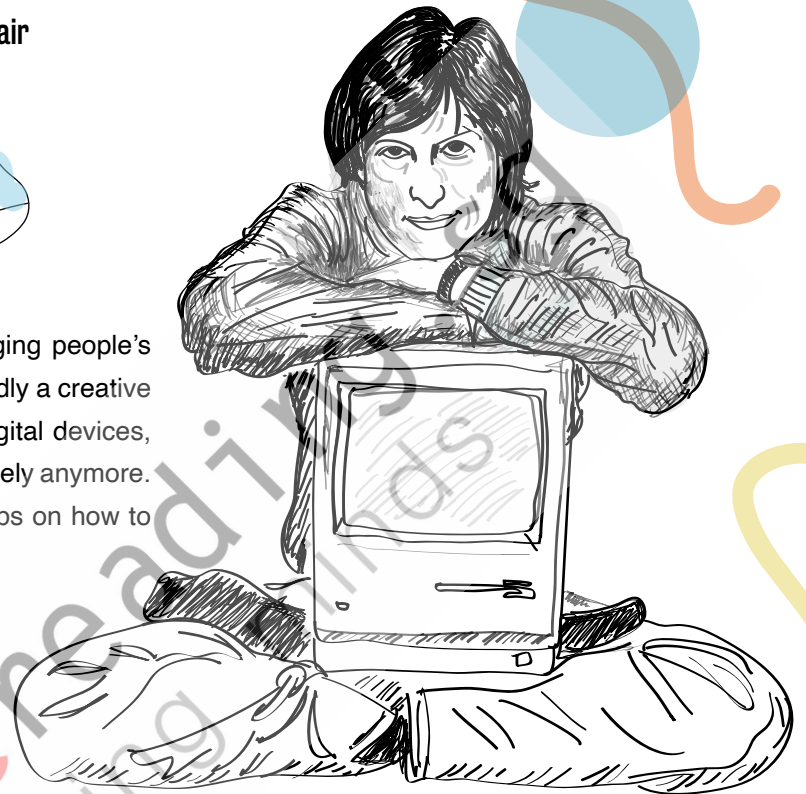


qrs.ly/scfqrqm

# HOW TO GET CREATIVE: THREE LESSONS FROM STEVE JOBS *by Shoba Nair*



Steve Jobs - the man who created waves by changing people's perspectives of a computer's capability – is undoubtedly a creative person. His innovative ideas have given us many digital devices, without which we cannot seem to function very effectively anymore. There are indeed many things we can learn from Jobs on how to be creative. Here are three of them.



## Curiosity

We are all born with curiosity (just observe babies and toddlers), but somewhere along the way, we tend to lose or dismiss that nature of ours. Curiosity is the seed of creativity. It questions limiting beliefs and long-held assumptions, and asks, 'Why not?'

Without Jobs' curiosity, we would not have benefitted from the many inventions that he has introduced that have made our lives better. Jony Ive, Apple's Chief Design Officer, wrote about Jobs' curiosity in the Wall Street Journal:

'He was without doubt the most inquisitive human I have ever met. His insatiable curiosity was not limited or distracted by his knowledge or expertise, nor was it casual or passive. It was ferocious, energetic and restless. His curiosity was practiced [sic] with intention and rigor [sic].'





## Openness to New Experiences

Only when we are open to new experiences can we explore the world, and ourselves better. In an intellectual sense, openness is a drive to explore and engage with new ideas, or discover and learn new skills. At one point, Jobs spent several months in India, as part of a spiritual journey. He was also one who was certainly eager to explore new areas of study. He took a course in calligraphy while he was in the university, despite knowing that the class would not earn him any credit towards a degree. This later helped him come up with a great variety of fonts for his digital devices, bringing creativity into the world of technology.

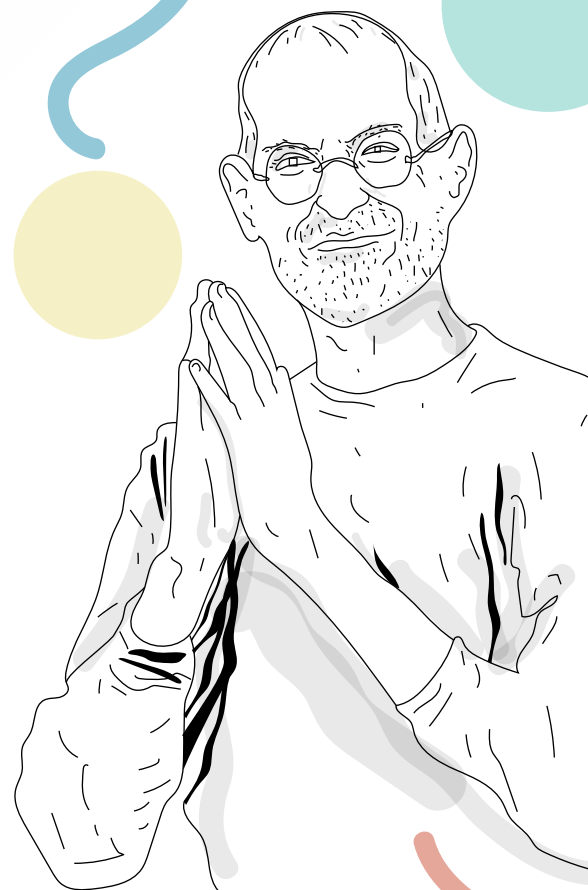
## Mindfulness & Meditation

Not many know that Jobs used Zen mindfulness meditation to reduce his stress, gain more clarity, and enhance his creativity. Biographer Walter Isaacson quotes Jobs as saying:

*"If you just sit and observe, you will see how restless your mind is. If you try to calm it, it only makes it worse, but over time it does calm, and when it does, there's room to hear more subtle things – that's when your intuition starts to blossom and you start to see things more clearly and be in the present more. Your mind just slows down, and you see a tremendous expanse in the moment. You see so much more than you could see before."*

Although the ability to be in the present moment without distraction and practising mindfulness is important for all of us, it is particularly crucial if we want to generate our creative juices.

It is not that difficult to be creative. We only have to tweak our habits so that we can ignite the creativity within us.



# EIGHT IDIOMS AND PHRASES ON WAVES



## come in waves

to intensify and then attenuate in a continual alternating pattern

*I think I am going into labour – the pain keeps **coming in waves**, subsiding for a while, then coming back so strong that I can barely stand.*

## make waves

a) to cause trouble or controversy, especially that which affects the course of a situation

*We have just convinced our father not to sell his house, so please do not **make waves** at the last minute.*

b) to do something innovative that draws a large amount of attention and makes a wide-spread impact on its society, industry, etc., often causing controversy in the process

*The new video game **made waves** throughout the industry, but it soon ran into financial trouble.*

## ride a wave (of something)

to benefit from a period of success and/or popularity

*Janice is **riding a wave of popularity** and is expected to win the Head Prefect election.*



### wave a (magic) wand

to provide the perfect solution to a given problem or difficulty, as if by magic

*If only we could simply **wave a magic wand** and make the Earth well again.*



### wave a/the white flag

to offer a sign of surrender or defeat; to yield or give in

*When the policeman drew his gun, the accused **waved the white flag**.*



### be on the crest of a wave

to be experiencing a particularly successful period

*When Cecilia got married to the rich tycoon and started living a luxurious life, she felt as if she were **on the crest of a wave**.*



### catch the next wave

to become involved with or follow the next trend

*It is becoming rather tiring to **catch the next wave** in fashion, so I have decided to create my own unique style of dressing.*



### brainwave

(informal, American)

a sudden, clever idea

*I could not figure out how to convince my parents about my decision to study overseas – then I had a **brainwave**.*



# Seaside county *making waves*

by Ming Wong







I had just got my first Cornish ice cream when I felt a bustle behind my head – a rush, a soft feathery flapping. Before I could turn around, a flock of seagulls swooped in and clearly lifted away my scoop of ice cream. I was left holding my empty cone as I stared at the birds flying into the distance. I turned and saw my fellow tourists, many sitting in cafes along the seafront, looking at me in amusement. “It was the millionaires’ shortbread flavour,” I said. “Well then, the birds at least have taste!” yelled back one woman.

I could not stay resentful for long. After all, the seagulls have been in St. Ives a lot longer than humankind. They now have to share the lovely Cornish coast with tonnes of holidaymakers from all over the world.

Cornwall, the county on the southwestern tip of England, is a rugged land with rocky cliffs, wild moors and sandy beaches. It used to be rather poor, with locals eking out a living from fishing and mining. Once, small towns with little cottages and narrow lanes would burst into life only on market days. The Cornish people even have their own dialect which other British people often have trouble understanding.

### The Cornish Dialect Translator

'AVEEP?' - Have you? 'HUMMIN' - Stinking  
 'AVEEDUNUN' - Have you done 'YAW' - You  
 'AWRIGHT N AREE' - Are you OK 'PISKY' - Pixie  
 'MAID' - Girl 'ZED' - Said 'SQUALL' - Cry  
 'ULLONAMINIT' - Wait a minute 'EZ' - Yes  
 'HURTED' - Hurt 'PROPER' - Satisfactory  
 'TIZZARDLEE ON?' - You can not be serious?  
 'ILLY' - Steep 'GIS-ON!' - Don't talk rubbish  
 'FARIZA?' - How far is it? 'SNO' - You know  
 'PIZEN DAWN' - Heavy rain 'IZZA' - Is it  
 'MIND' - Remember 'STEEVED' - Frozen  
 'PARTY' - Young woman 'OGGY' - Pasty  
 'PANT' - Panic 'SUMOZ ON NOW' - Let's go  
 'AUGHT' - Nothing 'CRAKE' - To complain  
 'BULLHORNS' - Snails 'CHACKING' - Thirsty  
 'TIGHT' - Mean 'EZYAU' - I agree w...  
 'PARD' - Friend 'DUMMENTS' - Tv  
 'FITTY' - Proper 'MYGAR' - My G...  
 'DRECKLY' - Soon 'TEASY' - Bad  
 'OHEEL' - Child 'SNOT' - Snob  
 'NICEYS' - Sweet 'OWAREE' -  
 'WERZETOO EN?' - Where  
 'BISKY' - Biscuit 'BAD' - Ill 'W



*English families mark out their spot with a towel or a half-moon tent and spend the day reading, digging and making sandcastles and gazing at the sea.*

However, blessed with balmy weather and sub-tropical vegetation, its coastal towns and port cities have found new life as tourist attractions. First came the artists and urbanites escaping the rat race of the city. Then surfers descended on seaside towns such as Newquay for the waves. Other coastal towns that have prospered include Plymouth and Penzance. This engendered the arrival of enterprising restaurateurs such as Rick Stein, one of Britain's most famous celebrity chefs. Gentrification merged into internationalisation. Cornwall now has possibly England's most developed hospitality industry.



There really is something for everyone. The Cornish coast is lined with fine sandy beaches. English families mark out their spot with a towel or a half-moon tent and spend the day reading, digging, making sandcastles and gazing at the sea. They only decamp in the evening looking for food, usually fish and chips or Cornish pasties which look a lot like curry puffs. It is the quintessential English seaside holiday.

Birdwatchers come to see kites (the bird variety) and botanists love the wild scrub and beautiful gardens. I went to see the Eden Project. These are huge geodesic domes looking like giant golf balls containing many species of plants, from Mediterranean olives and herbs to Asian ginger and betel plants. I also spent a beautiful day in the Lost Gardens of Heligan near St Austell. This 400-hectare ground was once a family estate, but it was so neglected that it turned into a tangled wood of brambles and weeds. Fortunately, it was rediscovered and rehabilitated, and today it is a beautiful area containing parkland, greenhouses, manicured gardens, a valley with ferns, palms, bamboos and lotus, as well as some incredible outdoor sculptures. The British truly deserve their reputation for great gardening.

I used the towns of Falmouth and St. Ives as a base. St. Ives is the more famous one, with a glamorous seafront dotted with cafes, restaurants and galleries as well as more expensive hotels and cottages with names such as Doodle's Cottage or Driftwood, or lanes called Virgin Street. The famous Tate Gallery of London has opened a branch in St. Ives. Its beaches are lovely albeit crowded during the day. Falmouth felt more local – you could see supermarkets, thrift shops and local old ladies having afternoon tea and scones. I went to a theatre one evening to listen to a local author talk about his book on country walks in England. The town also has an excellent maritime museum.







### WORD BANK

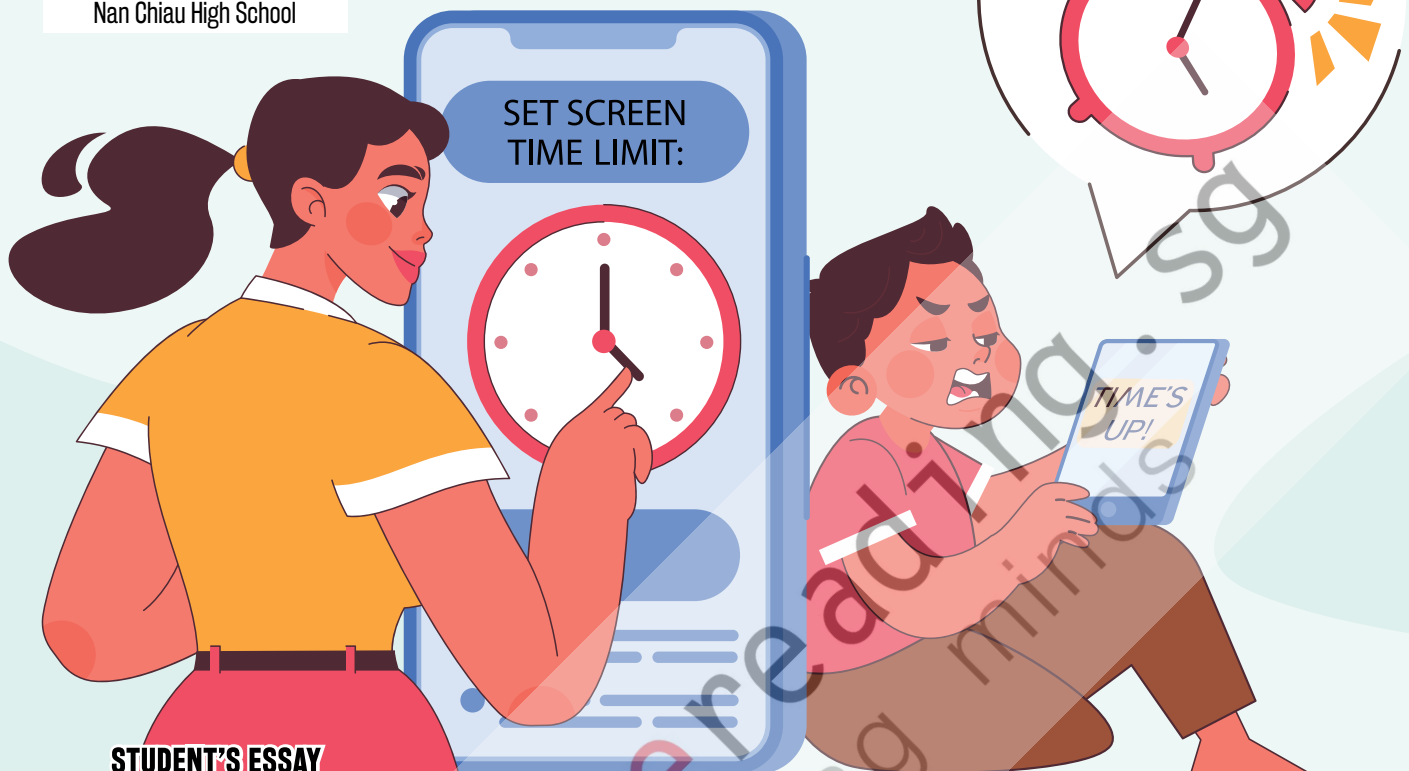
1. **moors:**  
tracts of ground covered with heather, coarse grass or moss
2. **eking:**  
supporting (an existence) with difficulty and effort
3. **descended:**  
arrived in a sudden or overwhelming way
4. **engendered:**  
brought about or gave rise to
5. **gentrification:**  
process by which middle class people take over a working class area, thereby changing its character
6. **brambles:**  
prickly herbaceous plants or shrubs
7. **thrift shops:**  
shops selling second-hand items such as clothes or household goods, usually to raise funds for charity

One morning, I caught the Sunseeker bus in St. Ives (a mere £5.00 to go up and down the coast for the whole day) to Port Portreath Beach. I had soup and bread, and carrot cake with thick icing in the Jampot Café – it really looked as if I were sitting inside a teapot. From the window, I gazed at the sand dunes that seemed to stretch for infinite miles. I saw a lighthouse glistening in the distance and tiny waves lapping the coast. It reminded me of a book I had to read at university, Virginia Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse'. On my walk through sand dunes and grassland back to the bus stop, a couple of seagulls swirled over my head, but this time there was no ice cream to draw them to me.

Cornwall is definitely making waves for the English tourism industry, but it is still possible to carve out a quiet, sea-salted day of solitude by the sea.

# Should parents limit screen time for children?

Clare Liew, 1 Gratitude,  
Nan Chiau High School



## STUDENT'S ESSAY

Parents should limit screen time for children as many children these days get overly addicted to their devices and use them excessively. Letting your child spend an excessive amount of time on their devices will also limit the development of their brains and slow them down progressively.

<sup>c1</sup>In recent years, the number of children that have an addiction to devices has rocketed. This is due to the irresponsibility of young parents blindly allowing access to devices for children to quieten them and stop them from making a fuss. However, there are many disadvantages to doing so. These are the reasons why parents should limit screen time for children.

<sup>c2</sup>Many problems could arise from them being addicted to their devices, such as behavioural problems, a lack of social skills and problems with brain development. <sup>c3</sup>Since children are still young, they do not know how to exercise self-control and will get sucked into the digital world easily. If they use their devices too much, it will quickly become a source of entertainment for them and it will be challenging for parents to limit their device usage.

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

+: The points presented are mostly relevant and attempts have been made to support them with evidence and explanation.

-: A rearrangement of the paragraphs would make it flow better. Also, the paragraphs could be longer. Providing the evidence in a new paragraph is not recommended as the evidence is supposed to support your topic sentence.





Research has shown that children who spend more than two hours daily on their devices score worse in critical thinking and language tests. This is worrying as <sup>L1</sup>this is the stage in which children's brains develop and process information the most. If they are unable to cope with these challenges, they will struggle more in their studies and their mental health will take a toll.

Furthermore, children will tend to stay indoors more often to play with their devices instead of going outdoors or bonding with others like other children their age. As time goes on, this <sup>L1</sup>will cause them to forget how to interact with others, have trouble socialising and have a lack of creativity in overcoming obstacles in their daily lives.

Without much exercise and with eyes constantly glued to their screens, health problems could surface with kids being more likely to become obese and develop myopia. Their eyesight could progressively deteriorate and there could be a probability of them going blind. <sup>C4</sup>Moreover, gaining weight could shatter their self-confidence as social media idolises skinny people and being inclined to be skinny could cause them to adopt unhealthy habits, such as starving themselves.

<sup>C5</sup>In summary, parents should limit screen time for kids as it is detrimental to their health, both physically and mentally.

#### Content:

C1: This paragraph would work best as an introductory paragraph. Giving context to the essay at the beginning makes it easier for the reader to process the subsequent points.

C2: This sentence would be better placed at the end of your introductory paragraph, so readers know what to expect in the rest of the essay.

C3: This is a separate point. It should be in a new paragraph, with elaboration.

C4: This point could be in a new paragraph.

C5: Good attempt at a summary, but it could be longer to encapsulate the points you have brought up.

#### Language:

L1: The use of absolutes such as 'will' and 'must' exposes arguments, especially those that do not have strong evidence, to easy attack. Switching to less definite modals such as 'may' or 'can' is better.

## Modified Student Essay (See modifications in bold and note deletions)

In recent years, the number of children who are addicted to devices has rocketed. Many young parents often provide children with access to devices to quieten them and stop them from making a fuss. However, there are many disadvantages to doing so. Letting the child spend an excessive amount of time on their devices could, in worst case scenarios, lead to addiction. Moreover, many problems could arise from addiction to devices, such as problems with brain development, mental health issues, and a cultivation of bad habits. I believe that parents should limit screen time for children.

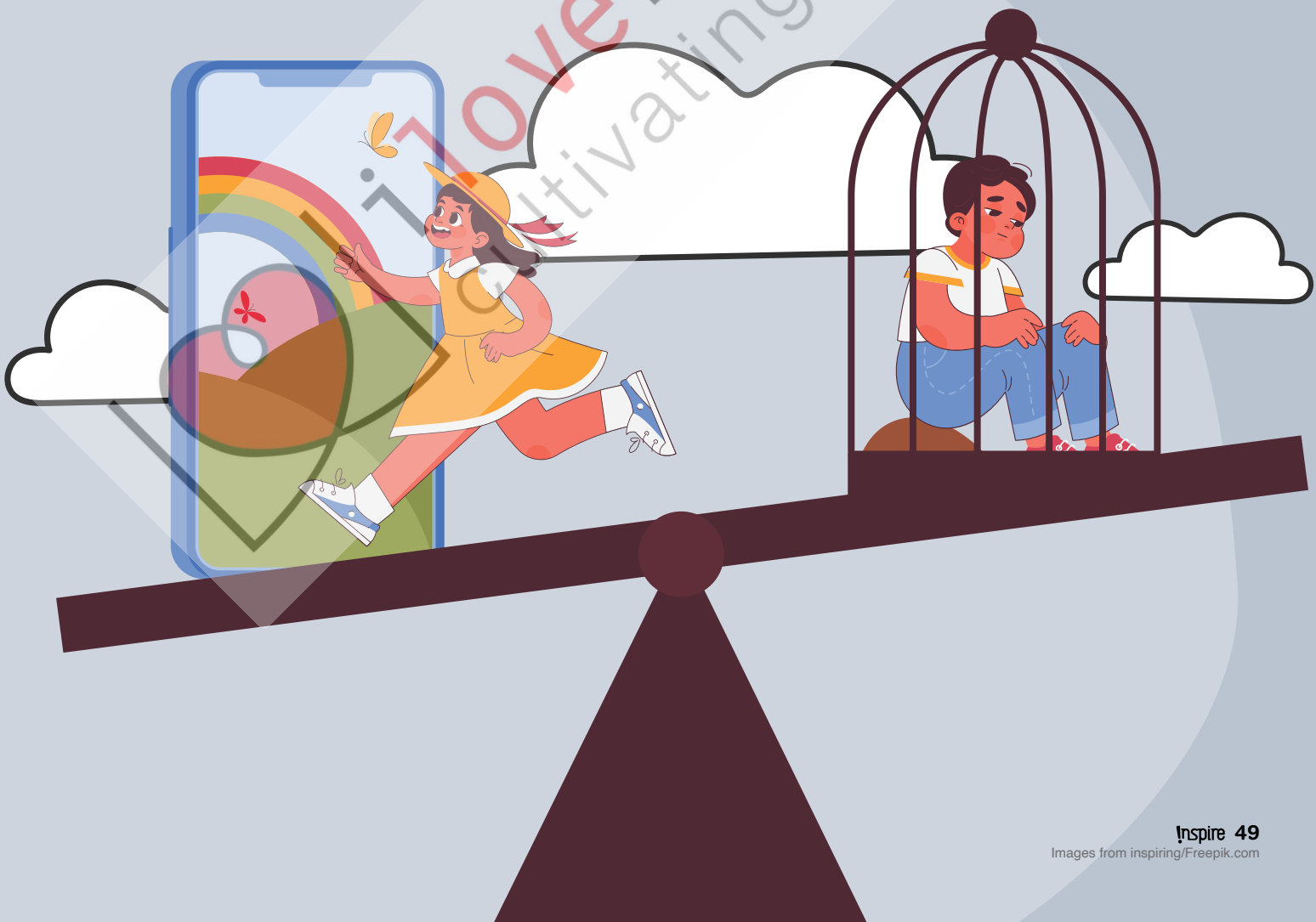
Firstly, since children are still young, they may have difficulty exercising self-control and are at a higher risk of being easily immersed in the digital world. It is hence the responsibility of the parent to help control their screen time. If children use their devices too much, it will quickly become a main source of entertainment for them and it will be challenging for parents to limit their usage thereafter. Setting good digital habits from a young age would help children develop a healthier relationship with their devices and the internet, while also raising their digital literacy. Hence, parents are crucial players in the early phases of their child's life with relation to exposure to devices.

A potential issue that could arise from overuse of digital devices is stunted brain development. Research has shown that children who spend more than two hours daily on their devices score worse in critical thinking and language tests. This is worrying as ages three to five is the stage when children's brains develop and process information at the fastest rate. If they are not exposed to brain-stimulating activities, the consequences will be felt most in the long run as they grow up. They could struggle in school and learn at a slower pace, which could even impact their future prospects. It would certainly be beneficial then for parents to limit the screen time for young children.

Moreover, older children who participate actively in online social spaces such as social media could develop mental health issues due to the unrealistic lifestyles and expectations they are excessively exposed to. For instance, social media idolises skinny people and this could cause impressionable young minds to adopt unhealthy perceptions of their own bodies. In extreme cases, they may even resort to starving themselves to attain their view of an 'ideal' body. This is commonly referred to as body dysmorphia, a mental disorder that takes many years for victims to heal from. Parents should therefore set time limits on social media usage for older children.

Finally, children who are over-reliant on their tech gadgets may develop bad habits that sabotage their own health and wellbeing. For example, they may tend to stay indoors more often to play with their devices instead of going outdoors or bonding with other children. They may adopt a sedentary lifestyle, instead of an active one, and this could cause problems such as obesity as well as decreased motor and cognitive capacity. Without much exercise and with eyes constantly glued to their screens, children are more likely to develop myopia. Their eyesight could progressively deteriorate at a higher rate, and if left untreated, this could even lead to blindness. It becomes even clearer that parents have an important role to play in ensuring their children have limited access to digital devices.

In **conclusion**, parents should limit screen time for their children as it is detrimental to their health, both physically, **in terms of brain development and the cultivation of bad habits**, and psychologically, **especially when social media promotes unrealistic body standards**. If parents want the best for their children, they must consider the negative aspects of screen time, even as their children grow up as digital natives.





## Write a story about the challenges faced by someone who cares for others.

Gai Yu Han, Raffles' Girl's School (from The Academic Workshop)

### EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This piece is a heart-wrenching and realistic look into the life of a caregiver. The writer displays a good understanding of the emotional vulnerability of caregivers and the struggles they contend with on a daily basis. The story is also impactful and brings its message across effortlessly. The ending adds an unexpected twist to the story.

I held the old woman down in her chair. She was thrashing about, and I could see **her veins popping as her knuckles, white with strain, pushed against the elastic band tying her to her wheelchair.** The elastic band tying her to her fate, tying her to the rest of her bleak, wheelchair-ridden life.

"I'm not going!" the woman shrieked, with her eyes shut tightly and her body twisted in an attempt to escape the wheelchair. I held her down with all my might as I **felt her warm spittle land on my cheeks.** I recalled what Mother had told me when I was younger: "Work hard and you'll become anything you want". I had studied hard, yet where was I now? Dedicating my life to scraping vomit off floors, changing adult diapers and spooning mushy broths into cracked, discoloured lips.

"I'm...not...going!" she whined, flailing her arms in such a way that every object within a metre's radius was then on the floor. Amongst the objects, unfortunately, had been an uncapped thermos filled with piping hot chicken broth. The clear, unappetising liquid spread across the floor, and, of course, I had to be barefoot. In that moment, what was then the **cool, pristine white marble floor** quickly transformed into an inferno. **The liquid fire burned my soles,** and with a jump, I pushed the wheelchair out of the massive puddle. However, I was not quick enough. I was never quick enough, whether it was the 'accidents' in public, the shaky grip on a water bottle, or the intentional spitting out of medicines.



As the wheels of the wheelchair slid through the puddle of broth, the liquid splashed onto the old woman's legs, producing a "Yow!" sound. Realising my mistake, I quickly muttered words of apology while fetching plasters and ointment. Unsurprisingly, in that hot-headed moment, I had walked right through the puddle which had caused this fiasco. The liquid, once again, touched my already blistered feet. Ignoring the **tingling sensation in my feet**, I walked over to the cupboard, each step **feeling as if I were stepping on a bed of needles**.

Even though my burns were much more dire than the old woman's, I knew who came first. It was always her. No matter if it was a clinic appointment the very day I had a job interview, or simply a refusal to eat anything the day of my diploma exam, I knew that she **always** had to be number one priority.

I applied the ointment onto the **thin, saggy skin** of the old woman's thighs. "You've got what you wanted. We're too late for the dementia test now," I said, exasperated. She simply stared at me blankly, just as how she would when she **zoned out** for hours at a time, as if she were staring into the jaws of death and demise.

I remembered **Mother's** words, the words she had uttered without a thought those many years ago. "Work hard and you'll become anything you want." I so desperately wanted to ask her, is this really my only purpose? I wanted to shout, to complain as I did in my younger years, "Mother! This is not what I wanted!" My brows furrowed as I glanced at the old woman's face, **embellished with warts and 'smile lines'**. I needed an answer from Mother, I needed just one chance to ask her what to do. Yet I knew I would not get one. Mother was gone. Unreachable. Even though she was staring me right in the face. As I stared back into the old woman's eyes, I knew Mother would never be coming back.

**Content:**

An important takeaway from this is that short stories do not need to have overly complicated plots. Snippets of daily lives already contain sufficient depth that can lend interest to your written works.

**Language:**

The writer uses the **five senses** effectively to describe things and occurrences in the story that make it more palpable and easier to visualise for the reader.

## I. HEY LISTEN

### **Paraphrasing and Rewording:**

Some key phrases and words in the texts that you listen to are written differently from the notes that you receive in your question paper. Here are some ways in which the text is paraphrased or reworded:

1. **A different grammatical category:** For example, 'integrate' (verb) from the text may appear as 'integration' (noun) in the question.
2. **Synonyms:** For example, 'present' (verb) in the text can be reworded as 'demonstrate'.
3. **Active voice vs passive voice:** For example, 'Roy would use the red ball', can be paraphrased as 'The red ball would be used.'
4. **Summarising:** For example, 'buses arrive on time and train disruption rarely occurs' can be summarised as 'efficient transport system'.
5. **Different syntax:** For example, 'The country has a modern image', can be rephrased as 'The leader wants to present the country as a modern city.'

Being familiar with how the listening texts can be rephrased and reworded can help you to match the content from the listening text to the reworded and rephrased content in the notes.

### **Listening Comprehension Activity** [8 marks]

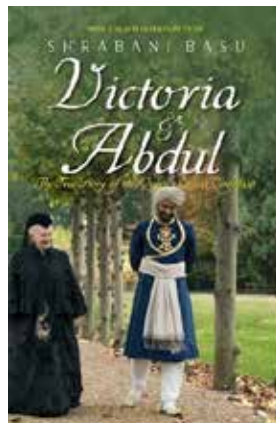
#### **Part 4:**

You will hear a librarian talk about a memoir tracing the unconventional friendship between Queen Victoria and her Indian friend, Abdul Karim. As you listen, complete the notes. You do **not** need to write in full sentences.

You will hear the recording **only once**.



### **Victoria and Abdul**



**Abdul Karim**

- became Queen Victoria's teacher in (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- taught the Queen the \_\_\_\_\_ language and about the ways of the Indians.
- used to work as a \_\_\_\_\_ [1]

**Queen Victoria**

- encountered a deep (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ due to her husband's \_\_\_\_\_ [1]

**How did the friendship affect the Queen?**

- she learnt about the (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of India [1]
- widened her (iv) \_\_\_\_\_
- deepened her \_\_\_\_\_ of the complexities of a world that was vastly different from hers [1]
- she became known in the end as someone who yearned for (v) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ [1]

**Why was the friendship opposed?**

- due to (vi) \_\_\_\_\_ that were present a long time ago, British officials were afraid of the \_\_\_\_\_ that Abdul could wield over the Queen [1]

**About the film 'Victoria and Abdul'**

- main cast included Judi Dench and Ali Fazal
- movie premiere was in (vii) \_\_\_\_\_
- received \_\_\_\_\_ feedback [1]
- clinched many awards

**Insights**

- highlights to the world the (viii) \_\_\_\_\_ ideas that the British Empire had
- shows that in spite of one's background and social class, \_\_\_\_\_ brings people together [1]

## II. SPEAK UP

Using video content to predict questions for the Spoken Interaction section.

- A. When viewing the video, look out for two features:
  - Dominant **images** eg. paintings, buildings, nature, food etc.
  - Dominant **characters** - What are the characters doing? How do you think they feel?
- B. Generate questions based on the dominant features in the video. The prompt given is usually a personal question that is connected to the theme of the video. Using the visual below, students can predict the questions for Spoken Interaction.

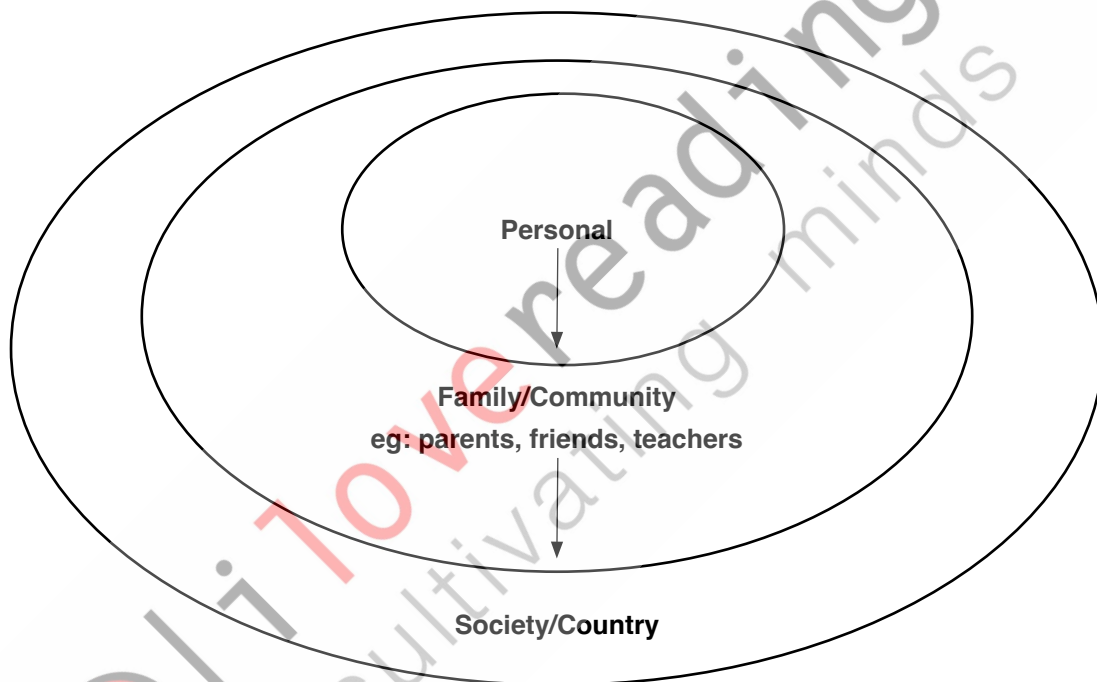


Figure 1

For example, if the dominant images in the video are of people buying clothes and fashion waste, the prompt might be: 'When buying clothes, what are some factors that you may consider?' Based on Figure 1, you might be able to predict the questions for Spoken Interaction:

'Do you think your parents and other adults share your views regarding sustainable fashion?'

'Do you think our society is doing enough to reduce the environmental impact of the fashion industry?'

### Task

Refer to page 36, and answer the questions under the Planned Reponse and Spoken Interaction sections.





### III. READING COMPREHENSION

#### A) READING COMPREHENSION: VISUAL TEXT [5 marks]

##### Reading Comprehension Exercise: Visual Text [5 marks]

Study the online advertisement (Text 1) and the extract from a blog (Text 2) on page 24, and answer Questions 1-4.

1. Look at Text 1. Tick (✓) the most effective title for the advertisement.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ocean Life is in You
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plastic Pollution in the Ocean Affects You
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sushi from the Ocean

[1]

2. The advertisement states 'WHAT GOES IN THE OCEAN GOES IN YOU'.

What is the effect of repeating the phrase, 'goes in' on the readers?

---

[1]

3. Identify the sentence in Text 2 which reflects a similar situation in Text 1 that 'fish off the West Coast ingests 12,000 tons of plastic a year'.

---

[1]

4. Look at Texts 1 and 2 and statements (a) and (b) below.

Decide whether the statement refers to Text 1, Text 2, both texts or neither text.

Circle the answer you have chosen for each statement.

- (a) Readers are asked to take action to reduce ocean pollution.

Text 1 / Text 2 / Both / Neither

[1]

- (b) The writer is dismayed by the situation.

Text 1 / Text 2 / Both / Neither

[1]

## B) READING COMPREHENSION: FICTION TEXT

### An Overview of the Different Types of Questions in the Fiction Text Comprehension

	Question Type	Comments
1.	Literal	Pick out questions that begin with 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where' or 'how'. Look for the information in the passage. Include all relevant details in the answer.
2.	Literal with evidence	Identify pieces of evidence/examples from the passage. Only include relevant details.
3.	Literal-own words	Look for the information for the answer in the passage. Content words (eg. verbs, adjectives, nouns) have to be substituted except for technical words.
4.	Inferential	Clue(s) for the inference can be found in the passage. Identify questions that have the following phrases:  Why/what/how/who/where do you think...? Why might she wish to...? What is a possible reason for...? What is the tone...?
5.	Vocabulary	Identify word(s)/phrase/sentence.  Where relevant, quote the exact words(s) from the passage using single quotation marks.
6.	Language Use	Analyse the language used and explain its effect on the intended audience.
7.	Global Flowchart	Identify the character's feelings, situation or points of view. Select the most precise phrase to describe the different stages of the narrative.

#### Reading Comprehension Task: Fiction Text [20 marks]

Refer to the text titled 'Finding Joy in Oddity' on pages 26-29, and answer the questions below.

- In Paragraph 1, (a) what do you think is the writer's opinion about school holidays?  
(b) Give **one** detail from the paragraph to support your answer. [2]  
[Inference]
- Why did the writer decide to enter the room? Find **two** pieces of evidence in Paragraph 1 that support your answer. [2]  
[Literal-evidence]
- Referring to Paragraph 3, explain in **your own words** why the writer was unable to participate fully at first. [2]  
[Literal - Own Words]
- The writer was concerned that the 'idea of becoming a clown seemed ludicrous' (lines 38-39). From Paragraph 5, quote **two** ways the writer's friends and family reacted to his hobby. [1]  
[Literal-Evidence]

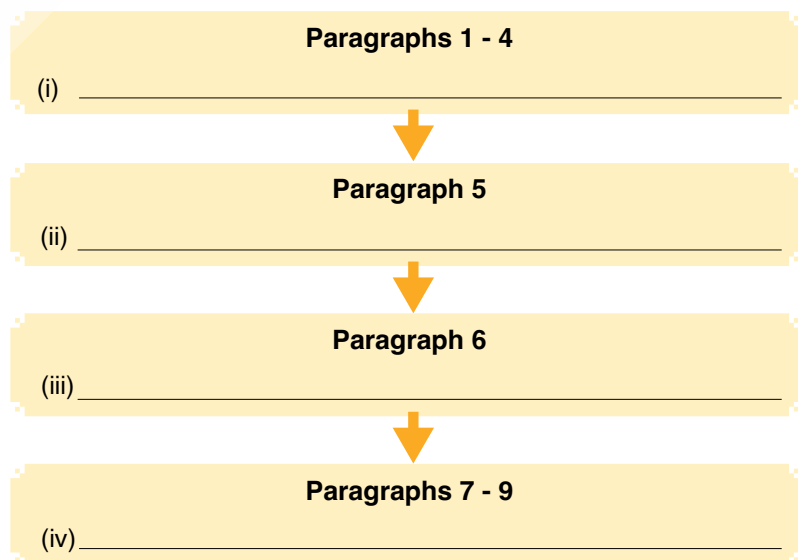


5. In Paragraph 5, the writer describes the decision to perform in the talent show as ‘a daring venture into the unknown’ (lines 44-45). What does this suggest about the writer? [1]  
[Inferential]
  
6. The writer claimed he was ‘immersed...in the world of clowning’ (lines 47-48). Explain how this claim is supported with reference to **three** pieces of evidence from Paragraph 6. [3]  
[Literal-Evidence]
  
7. In Paragraph 7, ‘the long shadows of the dim backstage lights felt all-consuming’ (lines 63-65). What does this description suggest about how the writer felt at that moment? [1]  
[Inferential]
  
8. In Paragraph 8, the writer’s appearance evoked a response from the audience. Explain how the language used in this paragraph makes the audience appear sceptical initially. Support your answer with **two** details from Paragraph 8. [2]  
[Language Use]
  
9. (a) Identify **one** word in Paragraph 9 which suggests that the audience was eventually enthralled by the writer’s performance. [1]  
[Vocabulary]
  
- (b) Give **one** piece of evidence from Paragraph 9 which suggests that the performance was a success. [1]  
[Literal-Evidence]
  
10. The structure of the text reflects the different stages of the writer’s clowning journey. Complete the flow chart by choosing one phrase from the box to summarise each stage of her clowning journey. There are some extra expressions in the box you do not need to use.

**The writer’s clowning journey**

- the performance
- an unusual discovery
- the preparation
- breaking the conventions
- a well-deserved acceptance
- the decision-making process

**Flow chart**



[4]



#### IV. LANGUAGE EDITING

Carefully read the following excerpt on the world's largest flower, consisting of 12 lines. The first and last lines are correct. For eight of the lines, there is one grammatical error in each line. There are two more lines with no errors.

If there is NO error in a line, put a tick in the space provided.

If the line is incorrect, circle the incorrect word and write the correct word in the space provided.

The correct word you provide must not change the original meaning of the sentence.

I arrived o my destination at 2pm.

at

My mother always wears sensible clothes.

✓

The largest flower in the world, *Rafflesia arnoldii*, is actually a parasite. It relies completely on its host, the *Tetrastigma* vine, to provide it for roots, leaves, stem and chlorophyll. The corpse lily, as it is commonly known, expend all of its energy working through the vine to produce a one-metre diameter bloom but thousands of seeds. In the early 1880s, the British governor of Sumatra (then known as Bencoolen) was very interested in the diversity of life on his island. Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles made many expeditions into the jungle and discovered, collected and documented numerous previous unknown plants and animals. His friend, Dr Joseph Arnold, accompanied him in one exploration in 1819, and together, they discovered an enormous red flower with white spots and the disgusting odour. The colonial explorers are lucky to chance upon the flower. The bloom only lasts for three or four days, after which it collapses into a black mass.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_

*(modified excerpt from howstuffworks)*



Scan QR code to access our suggested answers

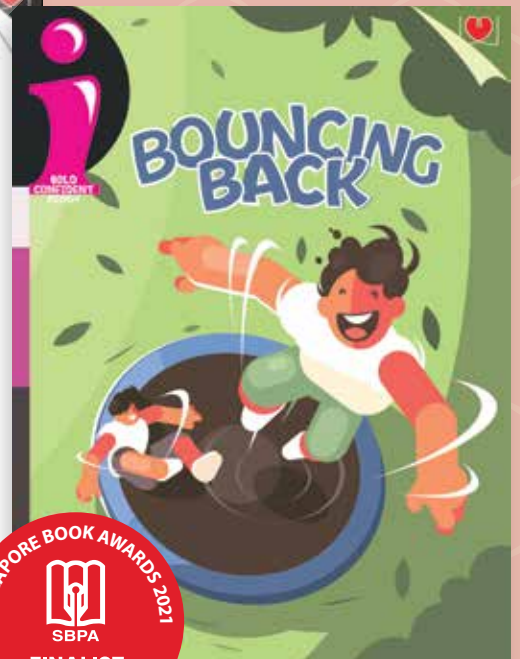


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