

posties



A day on the moon

The moon orbits our planet and brightens the night sky. Have you ever wondered what a day there would be like?

Irena Hui, an assistant curator at the Hong Kong Space Museum, explains everything about living on the moon.

How is the moon different?

The temperatures on the moon change a lot more than they do on Earth. It can reach up to 127 degrees Celsius and drop to as cold as -173 degrees, much lower than Antarctica's temperatures.

If you skydive from a plane on Earth, you will quickly reach the ground because of the force called "gravity". But it will happen much slower when you do the same on the moon.

Hui explained: "The moon also has gravity, but only one-sixth of the Earth's [gravity]."

One major concern about living on the moon is having enough oxygen.

"So, you have to bring your own respirator, or scientists need to look for a way to create it [on the moon]."



surface is not as smooth and developed as Earth's. Rovers are vehicles used to travel over the rocky and uneven surfaces of moons and planets.

"Navigation cameras [on the rovers] help us find ways and avoid dangerous places," Hui said.

She added that the rover's solar panels make sure it always stays powered.

If you want to visit the moon simply for a day, the three key items Hui suggested bringing are a spacesuit with a respirator and enough water and food.

What could we see on the moon?

Hui also noted that looking at Earth from the moon would be a sight.

"Just imagine how astonishing it would be to see Earth the same way you see the moon right now," she said.

Other "must-visit" locations include the Copernicus and Tycho Craters.

"They are two really big craters on the moon that you can see from Earth using telescopes. But it's much cooler to see them on the moon instead," Hui said.

Scientists have been able to extract oxygen from materials replicating lunar soil," Hui added.

She pointed out that the moon's atmosphere is not like Earth's. This means there is no rain and snow, which are essential for growing plants. Without the right weather, it is hard to grow food, making it difficult for people to live there for a long time.

What equipment would we need?

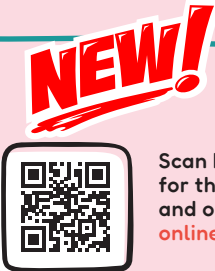
To get around, we need a stronger vehicle than a car because the moon's



atmosphere: a layer of gases surrounding an object in space

navigation: describes something that helps us decide where to move

orbits: to move around a larger object because of its gravity



Scan here for the audio and our new online quiz



Scientist fights to protect Hong Kong's agarwood trees

Scientists are using DNA to protect agarwood trees.

Photo: AFP



Scan here to play our online quiz



QUIZ TIME

1. What is agarwood used for?
2. Why are more incense trees being cut in Hong Kong?
3. Does the city's government allow incense trees to be cut?
4. What does the name "Hong Kong" translate to?

Scientist Zhang Huarong walks through the forest near his Hong Kong research lab, gesturing towards a rotting incense tree stump. It is one of over a dozen trees illegally cut for the valuable wood inside.

A stone's throw from the city's urban centre are forests home to trees that produce fragrant – and valuable – agarwood.

Agarwood is used in many expensive products, from incense and perfume to traditional Chinese medicine.

Environmentalists say illegal incense tree cutting is on the rise in

Hong Kong, fuelled by black market demand.

Scientists like Huarong are fighting back by taking DNA samples from each plant and creating a database to help authorities understand how the trees can be better conserved.

Hong Kong has long been a hub for sweet-smelling aromatic products. The city's name – translating to "fragrant harbour" – is commonly linked to the area's history of incense production and sale.

Agarwood is created when incense trees are cut, which causes the plant to produce a dark resin to prevent infection. The product then takes the form of fragrant resinous wood.

Agence France-Presse

Fun travel times for kids

Operators of high-speed trains in China have introduced a special carriage for children, which includes free cartoon books and toys.

This "kids compartment" is available on long journeys. These include the 11-hour trip from Xiamen to Beijing and the two-hour trip from Nanchang to Changsha.

The dining area has been temporarily changed to make it attractive for children, allowing them to enjoy the service for free. Besides colourful books and toys like magic cubes and

Lego bricks, staff members organise games and simple science lessons.

These changes aim to help parents travelling with young kids. Many parents, like a woman named Huang, have expressed relief, saying their children enjoy the carriage, making the trip more enjoyable.

Another mother, Chen, mentioned that her daughter loves playing in the lively atmosphere. The idea has proven popular, drawing 40 million views on a major Chinese social media platform.



"It's a very considerate practice. It addresses other passengers' desire for a quiet environment and caters to kids' playful nature. This children's carriage should be promoted nationwide," remarked one online observer.

Staff writers

Chinese high-speed trains offer a "kids compartment" on long journeys. Photo: SCMP composite/Xinhua

5. Which trains provide special compartments dedicated to kids?

Answers: 1. to produce a number of expensive products; 2. because of black market demand; 3. no, it is illegal; 4. fragrant harbour; 5. high-speed trains on long distance journeys



Ha-ha-happenings



Hang on tight

Hong Kong's twin panda cubs made their highly anticipated first public appearance earlier this year.

The cubs, "Elder Sister" and "Younger Brother", have been spending time exploring their new enclosure at Ocean Park's Giant Panda Adventure since mid-January.

Staff writers

Why is the panda crawling on the tree sideways?

Send us a fun caption by scanning the code, and we'll publish the best ones next week



Best caption from last week

Wong Chun-kei
(Aged 10), Yaumati
Catholic Primary School

New week, new colour! This green will protect us since it matches the river.



Tokyo's bean-throwing ritual draws crowds

In February, hundreds of people gathered at a Buddhist temple in the Japanese city of Tokyo for the annual bean-throwing event called *mame-maki*.

This ritual takes place on *setsubun*, marking the end of winter. It is meant to drive away evil spirits and bring good luck.

At Zojoji temple, celebrities and sumo wrestlers, dressed in formal kimonos, threw dried soybeans into the crowd.

Participants chanted, "*Oniwa soto, Fukuwa uchi!*" meaning "Demons out, fortune in!"

Despite the rain forcing the event indoors, people enjoyed



6. Why was the bean-throwing event held indoors this year?

collecting packs of soybeans, snacks and rice cakes.

Couples like Utako and Masaaki Iwabuchi, regular attendees, were happy to collect about 20 packages, the most they had ever gathered.

At home, families also celebrate by throwing beans. Elders wear red-faced demon masks. Afterwards, they eat as many beans as their age plus one for luck and health.

Associated Press

An increase in rat populations poses a challenge for urban areas.
Photo: TNS



7. Why are rat populations rising?

Climate change fuels rodent rise

Rats are found everywhere around the world, except Antarctica, and are often seen as a sign of poverty and disease. A recent study shows that as the climate warms, rat populations are also increasing.

This growing rat population is a problem for city officials, as rats can cause damage to infrastructure and spread diseases.

Some cities spend around US\$500 million (around HK\$3.9

trillion) every year controlling rats. In New York, Mayor Eric Adams has launched a "war on rats", appointed a special official for rat control and even held the city's first National Urban Rat Summit.

However, reliable long-term data on rat populations is lacking. Researcher Kaylee Byers noted that while public complaint data about rats is useful, it can be inconsistent.

Bloomberg

Answers: 6. because it was raining; 7. because of climate change



Stop and think:
Why does Sylvia Chan think money management skills are needed today?

Small card, big lessons

By Kelly Fung

A social enterprise is teaching kids about money management by giving them prepaid cards.

Solomoni is a free financial education app that comes with Hong Kong's first Visa card for children. It was designed for children from six to 18 years old. The card and app allow parents and young users to monitor expenses and set savings goals.

The app was developed through a social enterprise project under Solomon Learning Group. It aims to teach young people how to understand money and make sound financial choices.

Yeung Tsz-yu from Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section) appreciated how the app tracks her spending: "It helps me monitor my spending patterns and see where I need to adjust," she said.

Solomoni was piloted in 15 schools in 2023, reaching nearly 1,000 students and parents. It offers features that families can use together, such as earning money through tasks, setting savings goals and tracking spending.

The cards are stored-value and can only be used when the account has money. This teaches children to spend only what they have.

Encouraging good habits

The social enterprise behind Solomoni also has a series of online lessons about money management skills.

"Earning money helps children understand that ... hard work is necessary and that they must take responsibility," Alison Chan said. She is the co-founder of Solomon Learning Group.

She also stressed the importance of donating to charities, a practice that is encouraged on the app.

"Donation is crucial because it fosters compassion and empathy – qualities that are essential in great leaders," Chan said.

New way of spending

Sylvia Chan May-kuen is the principal of Ying Wa Primary School. She said financial education was especially important in today's digital world.

"We used to handle cash, calculate change, and physically save money. But now, with digital payments, a moment of impulse can lead to an instant purchase," Chan said.

Students were excited about the lessons they could learn from the app.



Solomoni, a free app with Hong Kong's first Visa card for kids, teaches financial literacy. Photo: Handout

"I'm most interested in learning how to evaluate whether a purchase is worth it – comparing cost and benefits," said Jayden Wong Ban-yin, 11, a Primary Six student at Ying Wa Primary School.

His classmate Karston Chan Hin-wang, 12, had similar ideas.

"I don't usually spend much unless it's something essential," he said.

Karston believed learning financial education skills at a young age would benefit children.

"Eventually, we won't be relying on our parents to pay for everything," he said.

"Since we'll need these skills sooner or later, why not learn them early and adapt to managing money independently?"



HANDY PHRASES

moment of impulse: acting based on sudden emotions and without much thought

social enterprise: a business that aims to help people while making money



WORD POWER

crucial: extremely important

empathy: to understand and share the feelings of someone else

monitor: to watch over something or observe the progress of something



THINK ABOUT IT

1. How does Solomoni prepare kids for the future?
2. What did students learn from using this app?



Scan for the audio and an online quiz based on the story



Practise Chinese with pictures

By Doris Wai



Some Chinese characters are pictograms. This means that the characters look like the word or meaning they represent. Pictograms make up about four per cent of all Chinese characters.

They can be a great way to learn the language. It is easy to show the meaning of characters like tree “木” and fire “火”.

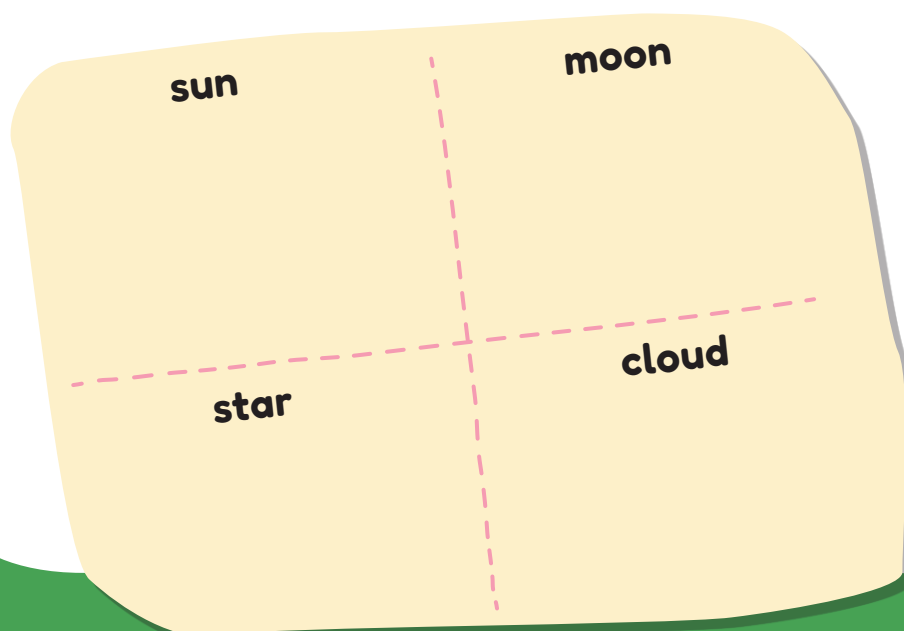
Most Chinese characters have two parts. The sound part tells you how to say it. Meanwhile, the picture part gives you a hint about what it means.

One example is the character for “river” 河, which is pronounced *hé*. The left side shows a picture of three drops of water. The right side, 可, helps us pronounce the word since it has the same sound even if the tone is different. Although 可 means “able” and does not have anything to do with “river”, combining these two parts helps us understand and pronounce the word.

About 75 per cent of all Chinese characters are made this way!

PICTOGRAMS

Many Chinese characters started as simple drawings. Fill out the chart by creating your own simple drawings for each of the words below. Try not to use more than five strokes for each character you create.



CHARACTER MATCHING GAME

MATERIALS

- 8 index cards
- scissors
- pen
- a friend to play the game with

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Cut each index card in half. Refer to the word bank on this page. On one half, write the character for the word. On the other side, draw a picture that matches the meaning of the character. Do this with all of the cards.

2 With a friend, play a matching game. Turn all the squares face down. Take turns flipping two squares at a time. If the squares match, you earn a point. The player with the most points wins.





Let's see
what our
friends
have to
say this
week

Feature
of the
week

Sweet shop showdown

HALO PANG HEI-LO

(Aged 8), Po Leung Kuk Camoes
Tan Siu Lin Primary School

One starless night, when everyone was asleep, a thief broke into Luna's sweet shop.

He sneaked in from the back door and glanced around to see if anyone was there. He snatched some candy jars from the wall and tiptoed towards the cash register. Skilfully, he unlocked the cash drawer with just a paper clip.

With a bag full of candy and money on his back, a broad, evil smile spread across his face. He didn't realise that Luna's parrot and cat had been staring at him the whole time.

As the thief hurried out, the duo sprang into action. The parrot took a long, thin string

from the cash register, and the cat took a valuable gold coin. Before the thief could reach the door, the cat threw the gold coin in front of him to distract him. Then, it hid under the cash register.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Someone must have left this gold coin behind!" giggled the thief.

"Cat! Now!" commanded the parrot, who flew swiftly to the ceiling. The cat sneaked behind the thief, holding the string. The thief was too focused on picking up the coin; he didn't notice the string under the coin. When he picked up the coin, he tripped.

"Ouch!" cried the thief in pain. The parrot flew down immediately, and the cat gave the other end of the string to the parrot. The parrot tied the thief with the string.

The thief shouted furiously, "Stop! You pesky parrot! Or I will lock you in a cage!"

Ignoring the thief, the cat bellowed, "Thief! In the sweet shop!"

Awoken by the noise, Luna, who was sleeping upstairs, sprinted down. She called for the police immediately, and they came in no time. The thief was handcuffed.

After they left, Luna patted the duo's shoulders and exclaimed thankfully, "You two saved the day! No reward is too good for you!"

She suggested giving the parrot a fruit basket while the cat could have an electronic rat. The duo jumped and danced in joy.



Photo: Handout

OUR READERS

Your say

JACK YUEN CHUN-KIT

(Aged 9), Creative Primary School

Last Christmas holiday, my family and I went to Beijing. It was a lot of fun, and I wish I could be there again.



The most interesting thing there was the Great Wall of China. You can't see the end even if you stand right in the middle. In the olden days, the Great Wall of China protected the country from those trying to attack it.

The Great Wall of China has multiple routes and is the most amazing structure I have seen.

The hotels in Beijing are excellent, too.

Our hotel had a swimming pool, but it was too cold, so we could not use it.

JAYDEN CHAN HO-YU

(Aged 7), St Paul's College Primary School

I recently visited the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Jockey Club Centennial Centre in Tsing Yi.



We saw a lot of animals, like dogs, cats, rabbits and parrots. Most of the animals there have been rescued by SPCA inspectors, and they are all looking for a new home.

Some of the animals had a tough time before coming to the SPCA, but now they are so happy. You can download the SPCA Adoption Date app to adopt one of these animals.

Visiting the SPCA centre was a special day, and I really hope all the animals there can find a home soon.

HAILEY SHING YIK-HEY

(Aged 10), Kowloon Junior School

My favourite subject in school is English writing. It is valuable because I learn techniques to improve my writing.



One of my hobbies is reading, which gives me new ideas and interesting vocabulary. I particularly enjoy reading historical and nonfiction books because I learn new things, but I also love fantasy and fiction, which inspire me to create my own stories.

Another hobby is playing netball. I enjoy being part of the team and participating in interschool competitions.



Scan to send your letters, top picks and creative writing

Top pick

LAURA VITO HERNANDEZ

(Aged 11), Ho Yu College and Ho Yu Primary School (Sponsored by Sik Sik Yuen)

Alice in Wonderland is a fairy tale about a girl named Alice who falls into a magical place called Wonderland.

One day, Alice finds a white rabbit wearing a suit and holding a pocket watch. After a long fall, she lands in a room where she finds a cake on a dining table.

When she eats the cake, she shrinks in size. Alice cries, and her tears flood the room until she breaks through a small door,

allowing her to escape. This is how Alice ends up in Wonderland!

My favourite part was when Alice had a tea party with the Mad Hatter. It was amusing when Alice tried to leave, and the Mad Hatter stopped her.

If I were Alice, I would have politely told him that I needed to leave.

My favourite character is Alice because she was a very kind and brave girl who just wanted to return home.

From this book, I learned that we need to be independent.

I highly recommend this book. Some younger children may need to read it with an adult because of some complicated words. Overall, it is a great book to read with your family, classmates or on your own. If you like fairy tales, you will love this book.



Photo: Getty Images



How does toothpaste work?

Toothpaste makes your mouth smell fresh and feel clean. Brushing your teeth two times a day with toothpaste also helps prevent cavities, which are holes in your teeth.

Some toothpaste ingredients mix with saliva to make a foam, which turns into a slimy slop that you spit out.

Many toothpastes remove plaque, which are sticky globs that grow on your teeth and form cavities (see graphic).

Toothpaste may contain special ingredients that prevent holes from forming, such as xylitol (pronounced zy-luh-toll). When bacteria in plaque eat xylitol, they release less of the acid that makes cavities.

Fluoride (pronounced floor-ride) is another common ingredient in toothpaste.

Your teeth have tiny gaps on the surface that are so small you can only see them with a microscope. Fluoride fills these gaps to make your teeth strong, and it keeps nasty bacteria from dissolving your teeth.

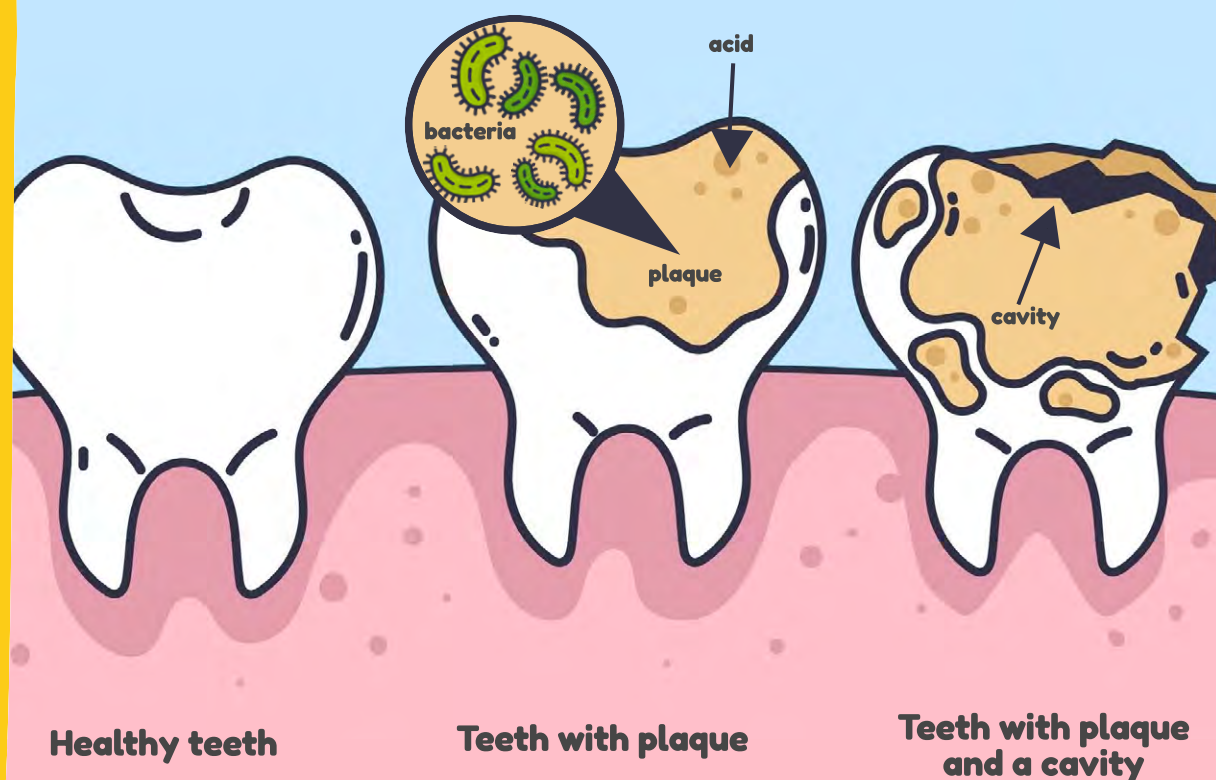
What did people use before toothpaste was invented?

People who lived long ago thought getting holes in their teeth was part of growing up, so they tried to make their teeth look whiter by using tooth powders.

The first tooth powders were made of crushed animal bones, ox hooves, and the shells of eggs, snails and oysters. Some people even cleaned their teeth with toothpaste made from pee.

Luckily, we now have toothpastes that leave a better taste in our mouth, smell good and keep our teeth healthy.

Plaque is made from sticky bits of food and bacteria. Some bacteria love to digest the sugary food we eat. When they do so, they produce acids that can dissolve our teeth and form holes, called cavities.



Source: The Conversation

Graphic: Doris Wai

Brush your teeth in the morning and before bed. Remember to spit out the toothpaste and avoid using too much. Don't rinse it all away with water; keep a bit in your mouth to protect your teeth from nasty bacteria.



How does toothpaste help prevent cavities?

What did people use to clean their teeth in the past, and how effective do you think it was?


NEW!


Scan here for the audio and our new online quiz

This article was written by Dr Arosha Weerakoon, a senior lecturer and general dentist at the University of Queensland's School of Dentistry. It was first published by The Conversation.

WHO AM I?

Difficulty: **Explorer**



What are my hobbies, and why are they important?

Life isn't just about going to school and doing homework daily. We also need to have fun, relax and explore our interests.

That's where hobbies come into play. Reading books, playing sports, exploring nature, creating art and even building Lego sculptures can all be considered hobbies.

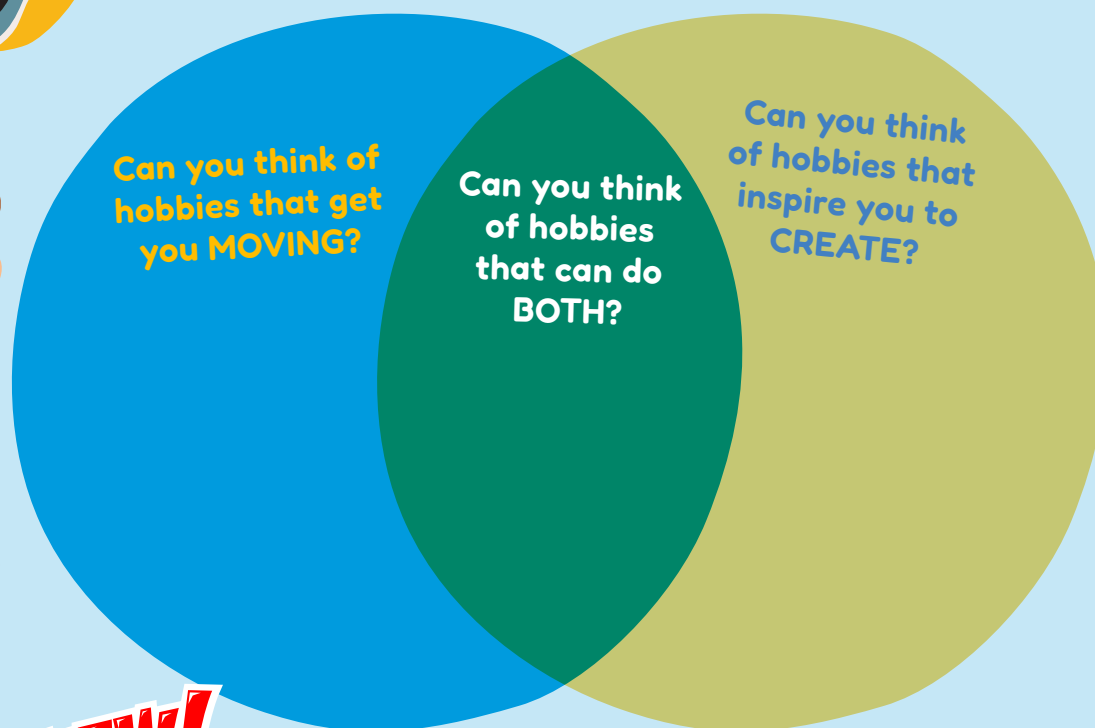
Sometimes, activities might not be enjoyable at first, and we might struggle to get started. But over time, we can learn to enjoy growing through our hobbies.

For example, learning to play an instrument might feel frustrating at first, but when you hear a beautiful tune that moves you, you might start to feel the

joy of creating these emotions for others. Activities we enjoy outside of school can help us explore our talents, find a new passion, meet new people, and take our minds away from studying.

It's also important to have a balance of different hobbies. Most activities fall into one of these groups: they get you moving or creating.

Fill out the Venn diagram below to help you think about the hobbies you enjoy or want to try. Then, add a checkmark next to the hobbies you have already tried, and draw a star next to those you want to try.



NEW!

Once a month, our "Health and Happiness" page will feature a series to help pupils plan for their future by exploring their identity



FUN ZONE

Laughing lessons

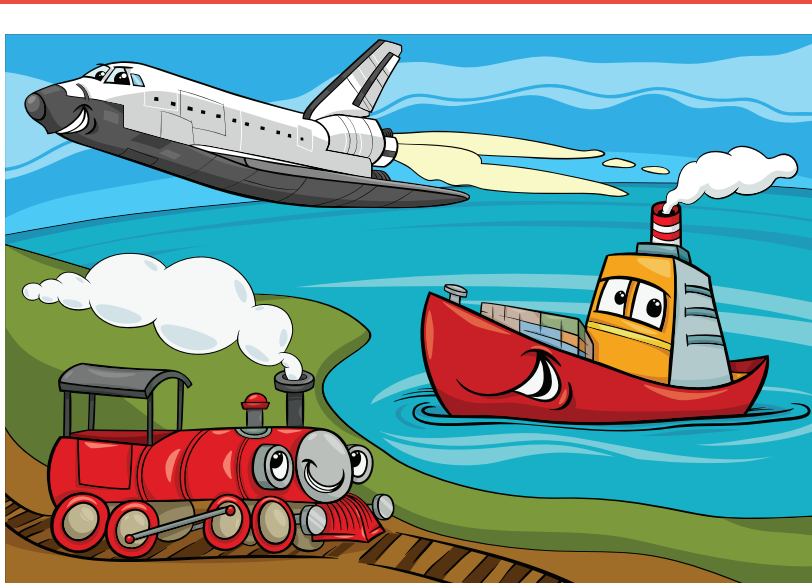


What kind of tree can grow from your hand?

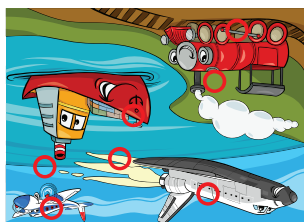
A palm tree

What kind of bow can't be tied?

A rainbow



Spot the differences



Riddle



What has holes but can hold water?



KEEP EXPLORING



You can learn more about sustainability and eco-friendly practices with a tour of Know Carbon House, which spreads awareness through educational activities, interactive experiences, games and more.

Get a better sense of how Hong Kong can go carbon neutral by joining a free tour of the house. But keep in mind that you have to book ahead of time! Individual tour groups can hold up to five people. Larger groups include 10 to 25 people.

Where to go: Know Carbon House

Address: 221 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

When: Tuesdays to Sundays, from 10am to 6pm; closed on Mondays



Answer: a sponge

NEW!

Twice a month, our infographics will help readers explore the world through informative visual content

Child's play in Hong Kong

Before smartphones and video games, children across Hong Kong's playgrounds relied on traditional games for entertainment. These activities, played in groups or alone, require both strength and strategy, making them timeless sources of fun.

By Brian Wang
brian.wang@scmp.com



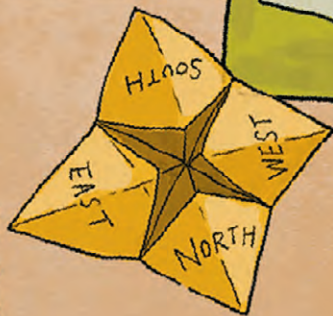
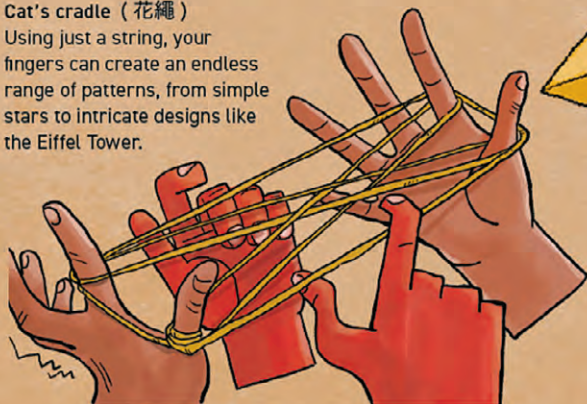
Hopscotch (跳飛機)

Draw a hopscotch grid on the ground. Players take turns tossing a small stone into one of the squares before hopping through the grid while avoiding the square with the stone.



Cat's cradle (花繩)

Using just a string, your fingers can create an endless range of patterns, from simple stars to intricate designs like the Eiffel Tower.

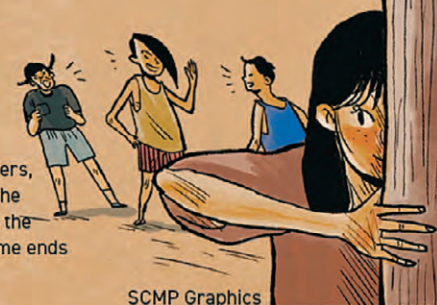


Fortune teller (東南西北)

In this classic game, players fold a sheet of paper to create a device labelled with directions and numbers. Opening the folds is a fun surprise that reveals hidden fortunes or playful outcomes.

Coming close to the boat (埋舟)

Players choose an object to be the "boat". A seeker counts to 10 while touching the boat as others hide. Then, the seeker looks for the other players, who must sneakily touch the boat and shout "safe" to win. If the seeker spots a player who is not yet safe, the seeker touches the boat and shouts the player's name to eliminate them. The game ends when all players are either safe or eliminated.



Number ball (數字球)

Players are assigned numbers. The ball holder shouts a number and tosses the ball; the called player must catch it before it lands. If they catch the ball, they call another number; if not, they yell "stop", take three steps and throw the ball, trying to hit another player. If their throw misses, they lose a life. If they hit someone, that person loses a life. Once someone loses three lives, they are eliminated from the game.



Finger war (劈手指)

Each player interlocks the fingers on both of their hands. Then, extend your pinky fingers up while keeping them tightly attached to each other. Start the game by trying to split apart the other person's pinkies. If your pinkies get split apart, switch to your ring finger, and continue until one person reaches their thumbs.



Chinese jump rope (跳橡筋繩)

Two players use their legs to hold a string of rubber bands tied in a circle. Others take turns jumping or performing other actions around the string. If they step on the string or make a mistake, they are eliminated. The height of the string goes up from the feet to the head as the game gets harder.



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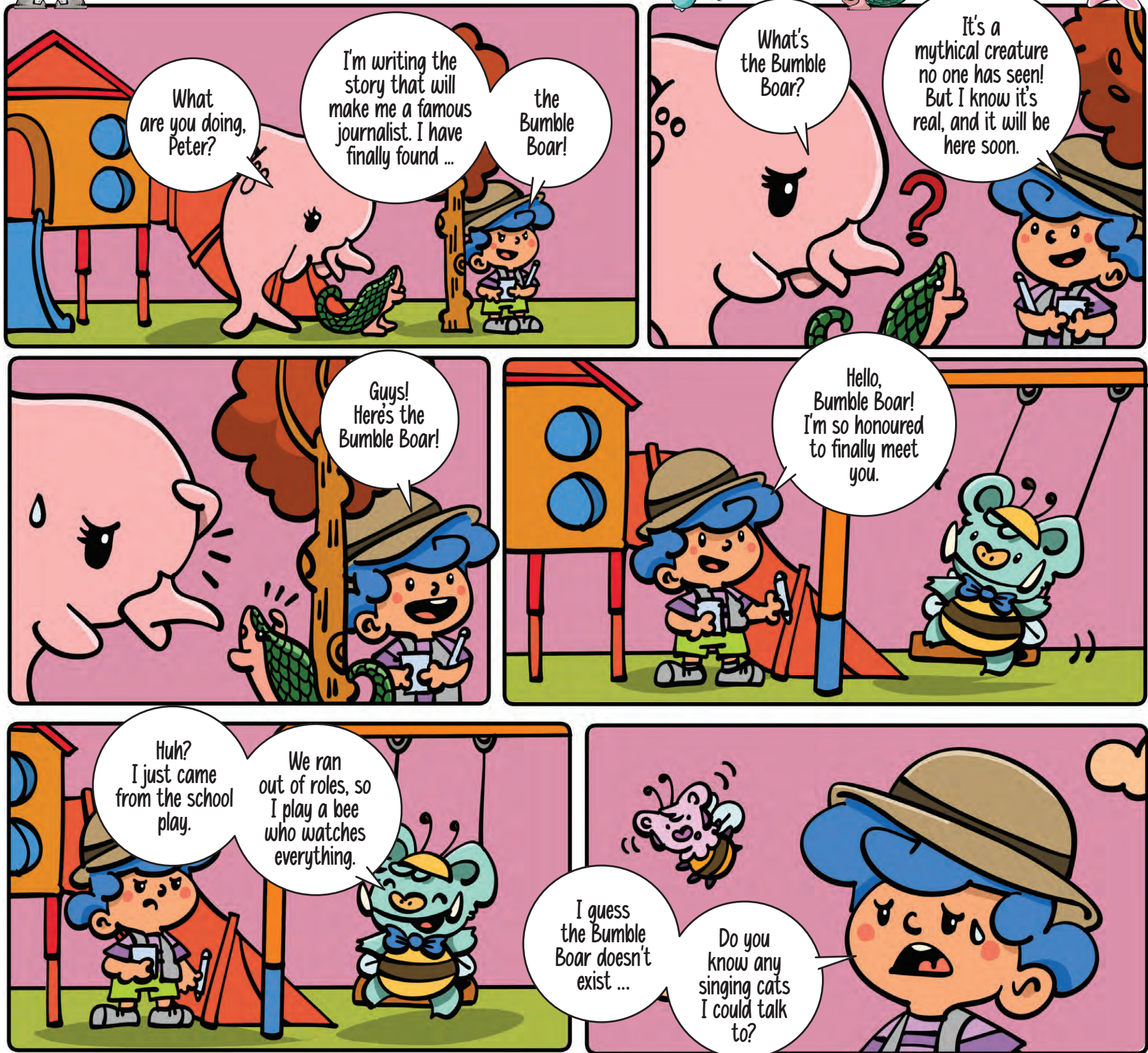
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Published by South China Morning Post Publishers Ltd, 19/F, Tower One, Times Square, 1 Matheson Street, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. Tel: 2565 2222.
Printed by JJ Printing Limited, Room 1405, 14/F, Car Po Commercial Building, 37-43 Pottinger Street, Central, Hong Kong. Tel: 3181 3399.



Values tip of the month



Resilience

How can you learn to become more resilient?

Why is it important to have a positive attitude even when things don't go your way?