

THE CHARTER CHRONICLES

Finding Connection in a Time of Conflict

This edition explores the subject of Geography. Geography is an incredibly broad discipline that goes far beyond looking at maps. It also explores how rivers and mountains shape cities, how politics impacts wildlife, how culture travels across oceans, and our relationship with the climate. It is essentially a study of how everything in the world is connected — how humans interact with each other and the natural environment. During a time when global tensions are coming to a boil, we need this connection now more than ever.

Even after five editions, Global Lens has remained a popular section of our paper. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the diversity of content it contains. From local current events to worldwide issues, Global Lens caters for readers and writers across a wide range of interests. Though we come from different countries with different cultural backgrounds, speak different languages and follow different religions, at the end of the day we still occupy the same planet. Geography teaches us to embrace our differences while also reminding us of our common ground, literally and metaphorically.

Like geography, writing also has the ability to bring people closer together. The Charter Chronicles team is a diverse community united by a common curiosity about the world around us, a willingness to explore and share ideas, and, of course, a passion for journalism. As always, we have worked very hard on this edition, and we would like to encourage you to spend some time with your friends and family while reading it. We sincerely hope you enjoy Edition 5 of the Charter Chronicles.

— Proud, Editor-in-Chief



TCC Geography Writing Competition

This term, the Charter Chronicles hosted its first writing competition, which was open to all secondary students. The competition was Geography-themed, keeping in line with the theme of this edition of the newspaper. We are delighted to announce the winner:

YeLynn (Year 11)

Turn to Page 6 to read her story!



Congratulations!

A special shoutout to Jin (Year 7), our Runner-Up!

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this edition of the Charter Chronicles;

- Mr. Woods, Dr. Starost, Mr. Evans, Mr. Moxey & Miss Carter; for your Teacher Features
- Mr. Moxey; for your contribution to the Community Board
- Ms. Wynn, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Evans & Mr. Singh; for your contribution to the 'Meet the Teacher' section
- Ms. Wynn & Mr. David; for your contributions to the Secondary Production feature
- Mr. Plant; for proofreading and approving this edition



NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!

We are reorganising the team structure!



Applications for leadership roles have already closed, but you can still join as a writer, editor, designer, photographer, communications officer or community correspondent.

If you would like to be a part of our team next edition, please contact:

- Miss Carter (ecarter@charter.ac.th)
- Proud (proudr@charter.ac.th)

Info:

Where: Miss Carter's classroom (English), third floor, language building

When: Every Tuesday after school

COMMUNITY BOARD

See what's going on in the secondary school community!

BTS of Charter's Chinese New Year Celebrations

By Nicky Year 13

Behind the Chinese New Year celebration lies the hard work and dedication of many individuals. Everyone involved contributed their time and effort to ensure the event was a success, showing true teamwork and commitment. Without each person's contribution, the celebration would not have been possible. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Year 11 to 13 students who volunteered their time to organise and run the game stalls in the afternoon. Their enthusiasm and responsibility helped create a lively and enjoyable atmosphere for everyone. It is through such voluntary efforts and cooperation that the celebration became both meaningful and memorable.



TERM 2 RECAPPED

Take a look at what's happened so far this term...

- 1 Jan. New Year
- 5 Jan. Term 2 starts
- 17 Jan. Junior Achievement Trade fair
- 20 Jan. Sports Day

- 29-31 Jan. FOBISIA Battle of the Bands

01

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

World Book Week



International Day

By Torfun Year 10

Every year, the Charter community celebrates an important event: International Day. But many wonder that, beneath all the fun parades and games, why it is important. International Day celebrates diversity, encouraging us to embrace different cultures and cooperate, helping us to create a better world.

This year's theme was 'Hidden Voices', which celebrates marginalised and under-represented groups such as the disabled and indigenous communities, reminding us that every voice — no matter how small — is worth listening to.



Photo by Hyun

Breaktime Games

By Mr. Moxey

Loads of students have been getting stuck into the games available at break and lunch in the secondary atrium. Our intrepid reporter tracked down some of the gamers to get their thoughts on the new break time activities. One student from year 7 said 'this is so great, I've always loved red and yellow circles and now I get to stack them and win!'. A year 10 who is a huge fan of medieval monarchy proclaimed; 'when I saw all the kings, queens and jacks I absolutely flipped my lid'. A sporty year 11 was dragged away from playing jenga, 'as everyone knows I'm extremely good at absolutely all sports so for me precariously stacking wooden bricks is nothing special, but it makes a nice break from Geography'. Let us know your thoughts on new game ideas; darts? bowling? inflatable sumo dojo?



- 12 Feb. Valentines day at Charter
- 14-22 Feb. Half term break
- 17 Feb. Chinese New Year

02 February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

- 2 Mar. School closed
- 3 Mar. Makha Bucha Day
- 6-7 Mar. TISAC Battle of the Bands
- 20 Mar. International Day
- 31 Mar. Secondary Production

03 March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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Sports Day!

By Hyun Year 13

Our annual Sports Day was an amazing success of energy, teamwork and house pride. On the 20th of January, teachers and students from the entire secondary school came together for a day filled with excitement and competition.

The day began early in the morning with the track events. Students gathered around the field, cheering loudly as their representative runners sprinted down their lanes. The long-distance runners pushed themselves to the finish line, and the relay teams smoothly passed the baton from one runner to the next.

As the day continued, the competition between the houses intensified. Everyone was determined to win as many points as possible and kept encouraging their teammates the whole time. The field was full of cheers and close finishes. One of the highlights of the morning was the tug of war between the three houses. After a tough battle, Samet came out on top, a proud victory for Samet.

In the afternoon, the students rotated through the various station activities, taking part in exciting team challenges and skill-based games. These station activities included: triple jump, shot put, football, bench hurdles and many more. Each station had a teacher in charge who explained the rules, and each activity lasted about 7 minutes. Popular activities were the tennis ball throw and the triple jump, which gave the students the opportunity to score more points. In the lively atmosphere, everyone enjoyed the activities, with a lot of fun and smiles across the field and the sports hall. Despite the competitive spirit, everyone showed respect and encouragement towards each other.

At the end of the day, after all the points had been carefully counted, it was revealed to be a close match between the houses. Samet was announced as the winner, coming in second place was Lanta and third place was Phuket. As the finale, there were loud cheers from Samet as they proudly lifted the House Cup.



Meet the Teacher

Mr. Evans; Mathematics Teacher

"I'm Mr Nate Evans, and I'm an eighth year mathematics teacher from the UK. What I enjoy most about teaching in general is helping students gain confidence in their ability to tackle challenging problems.

Maths often feels daunting at first, but with patience and curiosity, it becomes a subject full of patterns and connections. I love showing students that maths isn't just about numbers; it's a way of thinking that helps us make sense of the world around us.

My favourite mathematical fact is that ancient Babylonians were solving algebraic equations over 4,000 years ago - long before algebra even had a name. Oh, and they're the reason we have 60 seconds in a minute! It's incredible to think that the same ideas we teach today were already being explored thousands of years ago."



Ms. Wynn; Head of Visual & Performing Arts, Music Teacher

Hi everyone! I'm Robyn Wynn, and I'm so excited to be part of the community here. Since I once led a student newspaper called The Heathlander back in London, it feels only right to introduce myself properly.

I grew up in the Gororau Cymreig (Welsh Borders), where my very first "job" was bottle-feeding orphan lambs on a local farm. I later studied Ethnomusicology at Bangor University, which basically means I spent three years exploring how music connects people and cultures across the world. When I wasn't studying, I was usually hiking in Eryri (you might know it as Snowdonia) or attempting to keep up with the surfing and climbing clubs along the coast.



I'm a classically trained violinist, but I'll admit I'm happiest playing folk music or sneaking onto the orchestral percussion. I also play trumpet and piano, and I enjoy composing, arranging, and occasionally getting lost in digital illustration projects.

My teaching journey has taken me from Hounslow in London to Kathmandu, Nepal and now to Bangkok. One of my favourite memories? Being bribed with a cookie by a student to perform in a teacher Bhangra competition, which, obviously, I agreed to.

I love teaching because music has this incredible way of bringing people together. There's nothing better than watching students discover a piece they connect with, perform something they didn't think they could, or realise they're braver and more creative than they imagined. Being part of that journey, and learning alongside you, is what makes this job so special to me.



Mr. Roberts; Mathematics Teacher

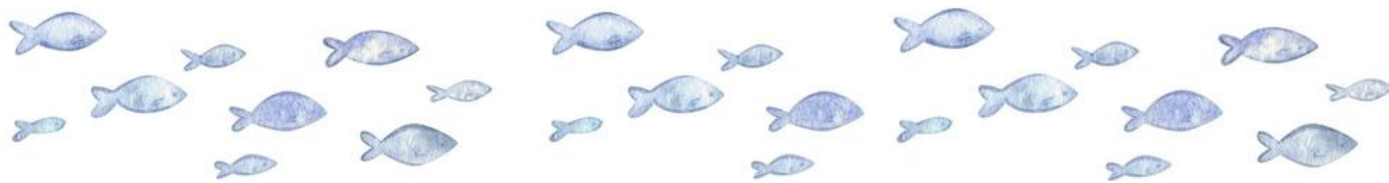
I love mathematics because it's the one subject where patterns hide everywhere — even in places you wouldn't expect. Maths isn't just numbers on a page; it's a language the world seems to follow.

One of my favourite examples is the Fibonacci sequence discovered by Leonardo Fibonacci:

1,1,2,3,5,8,13,21,34,55,...

Each number is made by adding the previous two. What's amazing is that this pattern appears again and again in nature. The number of petals on many flowers, the spirals in pinecones and pineapples, and even the arrangement of seeds in a sunflower often follow these numbers. Plants grow this way because it packs seeds and leaves as efficiently as possible — mathematics helping nature save space.

To me, that's what makes maths special: it isn't just something humans invented for school — it's something we discovered already written into the world around us.



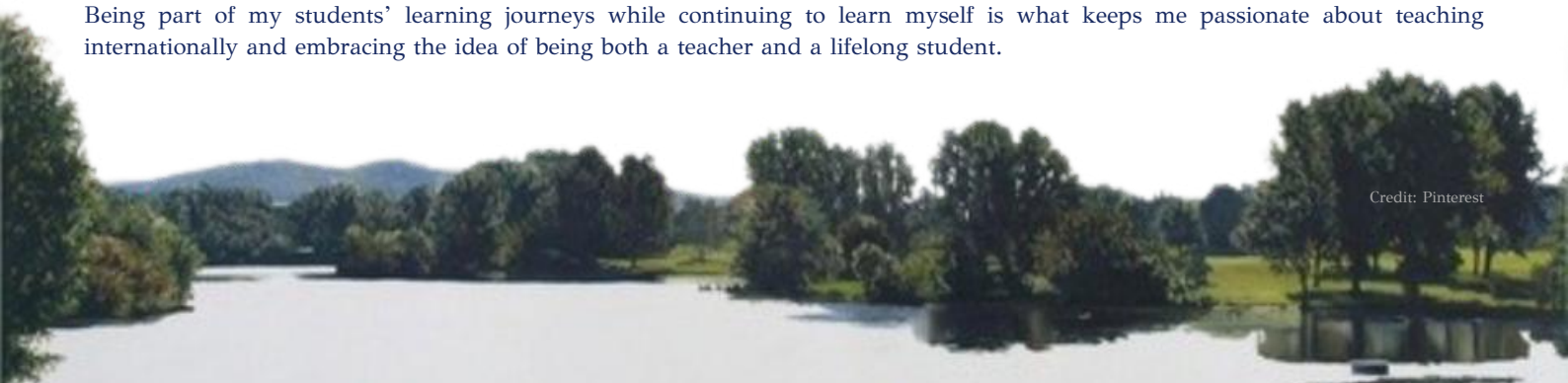
Mr. Singh; Computer Science Teacher

Teaching has been a passion of mine since my college days, when I first had the opportunity to teach high school students. That experience sparked my interest in education and set me on a path that has now taken me across several countries. My first full-time teaching position was at one of India's leading boarding schools, where I discovered the joy of working closely with students and learning alongside them. That experience also inspired me to begin teaching internationally in 2008.

Alongside teaching, I have always loved traveling and trekking, which has shaped both my personal life and my career. Exploring new places and cultures has been an important part of my journey. Recently, I completed the Jeju Olle Trail, a 437 km route around Jeju Island, and I regularly participate in half and full marathons.

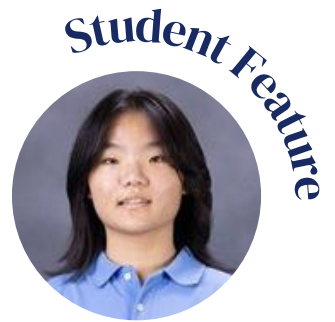
My interest in computing began back in 1995, when I was in Year 11. I was fascinated by how computers worked like the keyboards, the early software, and eventually learning typing and web design. Seeing how far technology has come, especially with the rise of AI, continues to make teaching this subject exciting and meaningful.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of teaching in India, Indonesia, South Korea, and now Thailand. Each country has offered unique experiences, languages, and cultures, and working with students from different backgrounds has been incredibly fulfilling. Being part of my students' learning journeys while continuing to learn myself is what keeps me passionate about teaching internationally and embracing the idea of being both a teacher and a lifelong student.



Competition Winner: “The Last Thing I Saw”

By Lynn Year 11



Stepping into a new world, my mother tenderly hugged and held me tight. It was around the middle of the seventeenth century when I took my first ever breath. The warm hug surrounded me as if it was the start of summer. The community near me was comforting. Being near my own kind reminded me of how I got to share the best home I could ever imagine. Surrounding me was a dense green foliage, as I took my first steps. Leaves stroke and itch my skin, and their tiny trails cover and cross until I'm holding a fine layer of forest on every part of my arms. The ground starts to absorb my steps, and I move silently across the padding made by mother nature. As I fall my legs get scraped, but I don't feel the sting at all. I immediately stood up trying to explore the new world. I became an arrow soaring through the gaps of the branches, all moving this way and that way, squeaking, creaking, chirping and singing their parts in a choir. I find myself out of breath, circling the towering trees, mesmerized. I was absorbed.

Looking up at the lanky woods, bore a bright crimson berry. The fruit was in groups of five and shaped like a spherical cone. As the current blew by the berries jingled like the bells on a sleigh. I shook the tree with a forceful push, forcing the fruits to tumble down its way to the lush green blanket. Picking up the wine coloured fruit, I sunk my teeth, revealing a burst of flavours. I could taste a fusion of the sweetness of a lychee and the sourness of a blackberry. A brown spherical berry like fruit, the size of my palm, lay adjacent to the crimson ball. Curious, I held it in my hands as I ripped off the hairy husk with my teeth. I exposed an orange-colored flesh. The seed lay in the lower half of the fruit. It was as big as an avocado seed but shaped like a sunflower seed. A sweet fragrance ascended from the pulp of the fruit. I took a bite. The flesh had the texture of a papaya but the taste of a sweet lemon candy. A mix of sweet and citrus.

I felt tired and grimy after I had foraged the woods for food. The stream created flutes whispering through the mazes of the leaves. I noticed that the river carried all sorts of life, algae, fish, amphibians and even the dried leaves. All the pieces contributed to nature's orchestra, conducting a beautiful wave of sounds. The downwards streamline connected to the mouth of the shore. As I followed the path, every wave crashed into the shore disappearing into the sand. The froth remained as if it was proof that a wave came just before the sand had swallowed it whole. I dipped my toes into the refreshing water. The cold sensation diffused into my feet, then my legs. It wasn't long until my lower half was engulfed by the chilling water.

Exploring the ripples of the crystal blue waves and getting a strong whiff of that sweet and salty expanse. I gazed into the flair of the sun painting the everlasting pink and orange haze blending into the deep blue ocean. I dipped my feet into the lukewarm salty water as my partner stood behind me, watching from a distance. A combination of orange, white and blue striped flags rose from the sun. Ivory coloured sails emerged from the horizons of the sun. At first I thought it was just the froth of the ocean, but what a big mistake I made. What I last saw of this beautiful world was the white furry body with parts of its face

covered with brown. Its ears perked up with excitement, the low growl humming into my ear holes. It exposed its sharp ivory coloured fangs. I turned back to see the back of my partner, running away without a second thought. I tried to shout and reach out to him. Splashing and turning, the briny water exploded with every step I took. I couldn't bear to close my eyes even if they were stinging.

Our FOBISIA Battle Experience

By Ferng Year 11 & Pooh Year 9

FOBISIA Battle of the Bands Success

From 29–31 January 2026, some of Charter's most talented young musicians competed in the FOBISIA Battle of the Bands Finals. With over 190 bands auditioning across the early rounds, Charter was incredibly proud to be one of only five schools to qualify with both an Upper School and a Lower School band.

Our students were outstanding throughout the event and fully embraced the experience. They particularly enjoyed the inspiring workshops led by renowned Singaporean musician and beatboxer, Charles "Stitch" Wong, and former English National Opera singer, Mr James Gower.

We are delighted to celebrate some fantastic results:



We are also incredibly proud of Kim, who earned a special mention during the competition and was offered a future collaboration with Ms Michelle Poh, founder of She Shines Singapore. Kim was recognised as one of the region's up-and-coming female electric guitarists, an outstanding achievement and an exciting opportunity for the future.

Ms Wynn and Ms Air had a fantastic time supporting the students throughout the event, and Mr Plant also came along to cheer them on. A huge congratulations to all involved, an unforgettable experience and a brilliant showcase of musical talent!



Pooh and Ferng's Experience & Opinions

From the moment we arrived, the atmosphere was incredibly ecstatic. We were surrounded by extremely talented musicians who share the same passion as us from all across Asia, gathered under one roof. Our goal wasn't just about winning, it was about living in the experience, having a good time, and meeting new people. Apart from the event, there was a gala dinner on the first day, which also came with a photo booth. When we were on stage, it felt even better. Being on stage, we could hear the crowd cheering and enjoying our performances. Other than performing, we had a wonderful time doing rehearsals, last-minute adjustments, and enjoying the vibe of all the other performers supporting us. It was a truly wonderful experience that we'll never forget.



Why YOU Should Join

If you love music, performing, or simply being part of a team — Battle of the Bands is an opportunity for you to show off your skills, have fun and participate in something meaningful. The Battle of the Bands is not only a place to perform but also a place to learn from professionals who come in to teach us workshops. Whether you want to just perform or learn new things, Battle of the Bands is something everyone should try if you have a musical talent you want to show off.

School of Rock Debuts with Electrifying Performance

By Proud Year 13 & Pun Year 10

It was a lot of work to get this show on the road, and its execution required the collaboration of many different groups. As Assistant Directors, we were responsible for helping Mr David and Ms Wynn edit the script, block scenes, and give feedback to the actors. In addition to this, Pun was helping Mr David cue the actors backstage, while Proud was helping Ms Wynn cue the music, sound effects and side lights — all of which came together to give you ‘The School of Rock’ performance. Here are our experiences from the Opening Night.

From the moment the curtains parted, the audience was met with detailed set designs, courtesy of Miss Incemen and lots of student volunteers. Combined with the props and costumes, they really brought Horace Green Prep to life. The dazzling lights, primarily operated by our student lighting crew, illuminated the stage as the cast delivered an energetic performance that was met with cheers and enthusiasm from the audience. And of course, it wouldn’t be a musical without the amazing musical numbers. The band members, playing live, and dancers played a crucial part in creating moments that captured both the high-energy and emotional moments of the story.



“It’s always a challenge doing a show in a new school. It’s been a privilege working with so many naturally talented students. This is a mega-length of a show to put on, and all of the students involved should be really proud of themselves. Looking forward to next year!”
— Miss Wynn

“What I love most about massive productions like this is how it brings everyone together. It teaches brilliant individuals the importance of gestalt that the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts. As Joseph Campbell said, ‘A hero is someone who gives himself to something bigger than himself’.”
— Mr. David

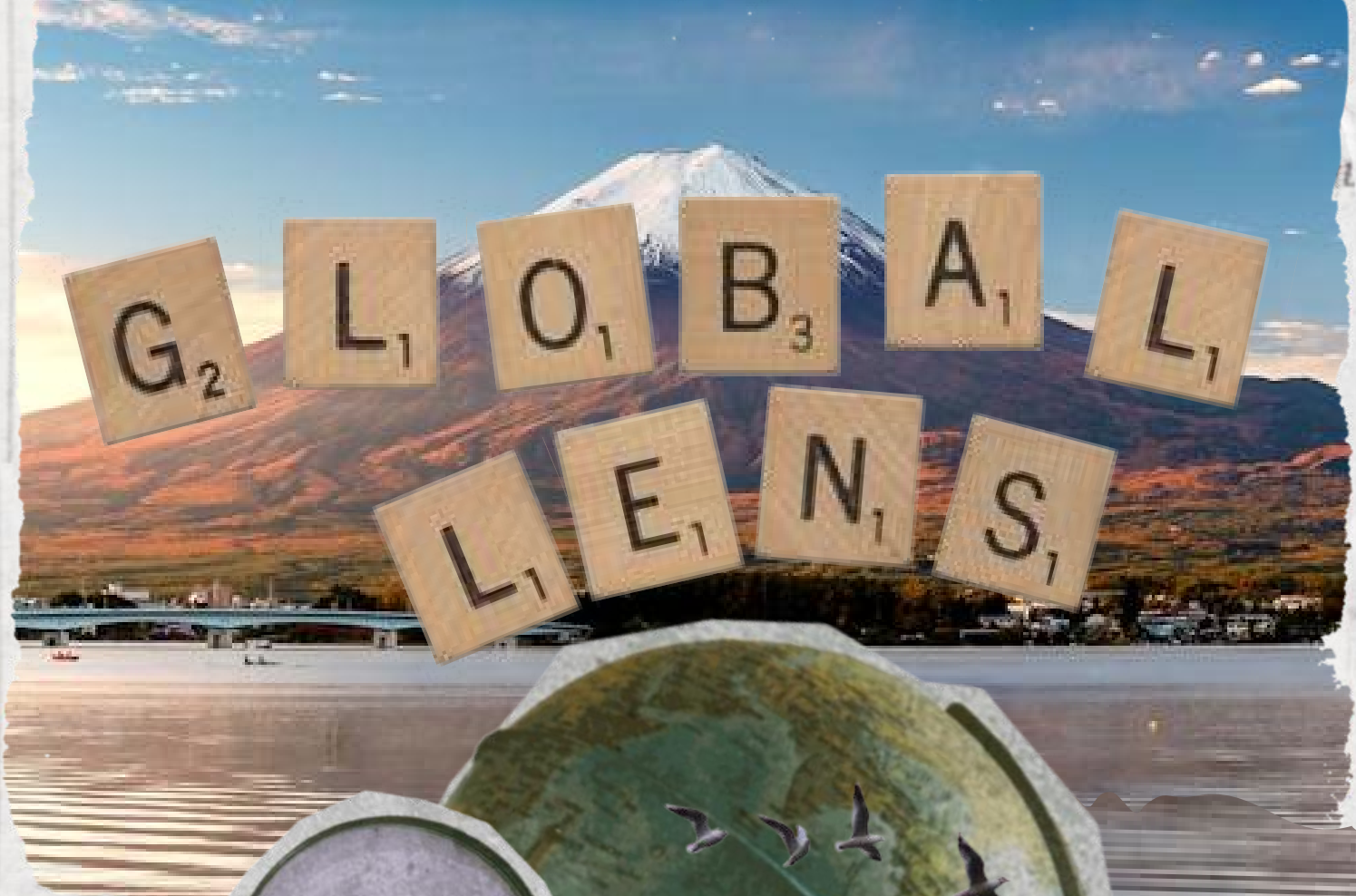


We’d like to give a special shoutout to Kim, our incredible lead actress playing Dewey Finn. We couldn’t have done this without you!

Now let’s take a peek at both the “orderly” and chaotic activities happening behind the curtains. As a part of ‘backstage etiquette’ communication was practically a game of charades. Actors had the chance to practice their miming skills and mouthing abilities due to the sensitivity of the microphones. Forms of communication also expanded to writing on whiteboards for any onstage cues. But the chaos doesn’t end there — actors who entered the wings had to venture into the darkness to find their script. We must applaud the actors for being able to navigate their way and swiftly pick up any props in the dimly lit wings. Amidst the chaos, the cast managed to keep up with the fast-paced nature of backstage cues and energetically carried out their role on stage. That energy was also shared with the crew, considering the widespread cheering.

As with any production, not everything went according to plan. But the cast’s quick thinking and seamless improvisation kept the performance running despite some technical difficulties. After countless rehearsals filled with plenty of ups and downs, chaos and laughter, everyone pulled together and gave it their all both on and off stage. So yes, it was definitely not an easy journey, but Noah’s brilliantly executed line “Mullins!!!” made the tiresome days worthwhile. We are both grateful to have been a part of this rollercoaster of a production, and thankful for the experience we have gained from our role as Assistant Directors.





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Teacher Feature

Shifting Baseline Syndrome

By Mr. Woods, Whole-School Inclusion Coordinator

Growing up in South Cumbria, five minutes' walk to Morecambe Bay and only ten minutes' drive to the Lake District, I believed I lived in a natural area. Whenever meeting people and going through the usual questions, what's your name? What do you do? Where do you come from? People always remark on how lucky I am to come from near the Lake District. It is an area described using adjectives such as 'rugged, idyllic, wild, natural', and the list goes on. However, these words are deceiving, and I would only realise this well into my 20s. I, like everyone around me, grew up suffering from shifting baseline syndrome.

As many people from my small, market hometown do, we move away once finishing school. My close-knit group of friends all moved away. One of my closest friends moved to Canada, and I realised my delusion when travelling through British Columbia, the western and most beautiful part of Canada. Here, I saw creatures I had dreamed of seeing since I was a young boy, looking at animal books and watching nature documentaries: sea otters, bald eagles, black bears, humpback whales, marmots, and the pinnacle... orcas; 36 in one day from three different pods. After 3 weeks in Canada, whilst hiking the mountains around Whistler, it suddenly struck me. This is rugged, idyllic, and wild. This is natural.

The mountains were covered in thick temperate rainforest that slowly morphed into alpine shrubs and flowers as I climbed higher. Birdsong was everywhere; the place was alive with wildlife. When I reached the summit, I looked out across the landscape, green stretching endlessly, only pierced by the snowy peaks of the Coast Mountains. It then hit me: this is not the Lake District, this is how the Lake District is meant to be. I realised I had shifting baseline syndrome: a disorder in which each generation believes the environmental conditions they grow up with are normal.

After my trip, the cognitive dissonance was ringing in my head. I had always thought I was from a natural part of the world, but in reality, it is largely human-made. The landscapes are beautiful, the glaciated U-shaped valleys, the craggy cliffs with jagged peaks above them, but even they are heavily impacted by humans. Centuries of sheep farming have stripped the land of vegetation, shallowed the soils, and made slopes more unstable, leading to greater erosion. Before hiking, I hear and see more wildlife in my garden than I do spending a day in 'nature'. In fact, London has a higher rate of tree cover than Cumbria does!

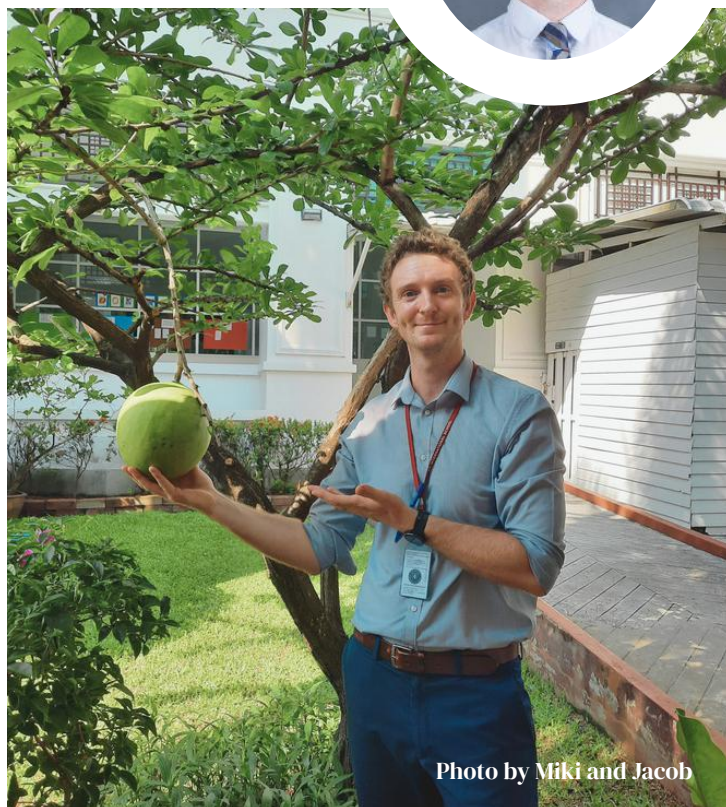


Photo by Miki and Jacob

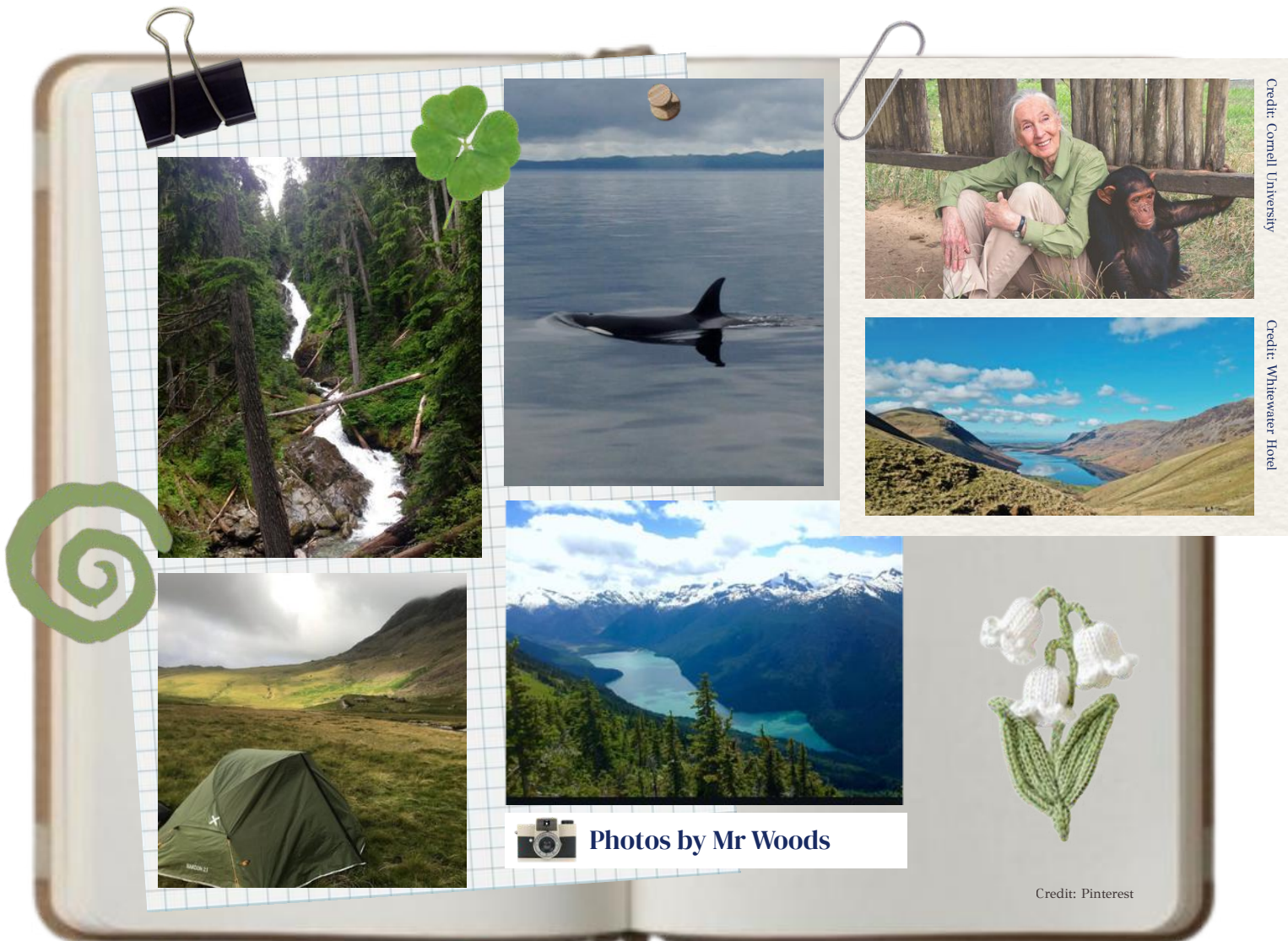
After researching and discovering that this process had a name, I delved deeper. I remembered long childhood family-car journeys in the summer holidays, down to Devon and Cornwall. On arrival, my dad would clean the windscreen and number plate due to all the insects that had splattered against them during the drive. Nowadays, this isn't needed. The number of insects has decreased due to a host of reasons, including habitat loss, the industrial use of pesticides, and climate change.

My opinions were once controversial, but over time, people are starting to realise that barren hillsides with a monoculture of grass and the only life being sheep are far from wild. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, yet we often lecture others about environmental damage, whether that be coal burning in China or deforestation in the Amazon. Before we criticise others, we must first look in the mirror.



Credit: Pinterest

In the late 18th century, Oliver Goldsmith, an Irish writer, described the arrival of herring as seen from the shores of Britain: “Divided into distinct columns of five or six miles in length and three or four broad; while the water before them curls up, as if forced out of its bed... the whole water seems alive, and is seen so black with them to a great distance that the number seems inexhaustible. Longfin and bluefin tuna, porbeagle and thresher sharks followed, and within sight of the shore, pods of fin whales and sperm whales moved behind the dense shoals”. Today the occasional sighting of such species in UK waters makes headlines; this is shifting baseline syndrome in action. Children are growing up believing whales, sharks, and large shoals of fish are not common in UK waters.



Photos by Mr Woods

Credit: Pinterest

However, the purpose of this piece is not to complain and say the world is doomed; quite the opposite. Around the world, there are success stories. Humpback whale populations, for example, have rebounded to over 80,000 after intensive hunting. I was lucky enough to see the spectacle of humpback whales migrating south for winter off the coast of Western Australia, looking across the sea and seeing three, four, five, even seven blowholes at once. Giant pandas, the poster animal of species at risk around the world, are no longer classified as endangered. Thailand is increasing its forest cover and is one of the few countries in the world where tiger numbers are rising. Thailand's wild areas are one of the reasons I love living here, with Kaeng Krachan National Park being the jewel in its natural crown.

So all is not lost. We need to understand where we are; we are not in a good place, but we can also recognise that things can improve if we acknowledge our own shifting baseline syndrome.

I will leave the final words to the late, great, and truly inspiring naturalist, Dame Jane Goodall: “There is still a lot of darkness in the world, but if you light a candle, you can help show the way.”

Teacher Feature

Why Every Landscape (Geography) is a Physics Experiment

By Dr. Starost, Deputy Head of Secondary & Physics Teacher

A world tour featuring the Charter Geography teachers!

Teacher Feature



Think geography is just maps and case studies? Think again. Every mountain, beach, and desert you've ever seen is the result of physics in action.

Physics and Geography go hand in hand, and this article will help explain how.

All photos are generated by AI

Why is Iguazú Falls so loud? (Brazil and Argentina)



At its core, this is about the conservation of energy. Water at the top of the falls has gravitational potential energy because of its height. As it falls, that energy transfers into kinetic energy. When the water crashes into the rocks below, the energy spreads out as heat and vibrations in the air, which we hear as sound (and even feel through the ground).

Fun Fact: the "Devil's Throat" section is so loud that sound waves can reach over 100 decibels, about as loud as a train.

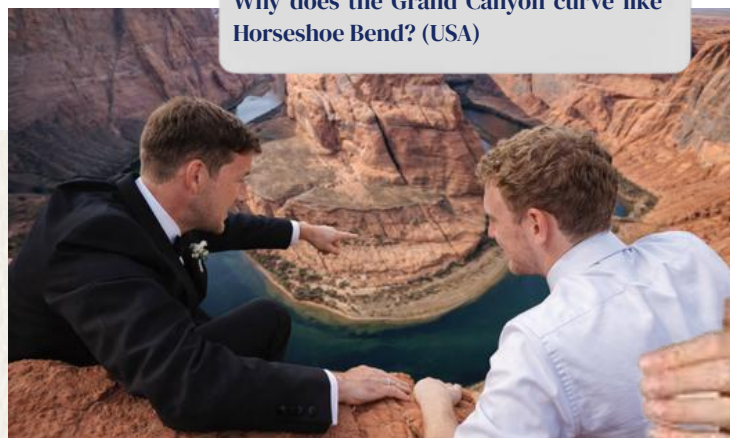
This landscape is shaped by forces and energy in moving water. Flowing water has kinetic energy, but it doesn't move evenly. As water changes direction around a bend, it experiences a centripetal force. This results in greater erosion on the outer bank (where water flows faster). Slower-moving water on the inside loses energy and deposits sediment.

Over time, this difference in force creates dramatic curves like Horseshoe Bend, all driven by fluid dynamics.

MESSAGES

now

Why does the Grand Canyon curve like Horseshoe Bend? (USA)



Fun Fact: The Colorado River has carved the Grand Canyon over 5–6 million years, proving that even small forces, given enough time, can create massive landscapes.

Why are coastlines constantly changing? (Ghana)

The key idea here is energy transfer by waves. Waves carry energy from the ocean toward the shore. When they break, that energy is transferred to the land through changes in momentum (Newton's 2nd Law), producing forces that break rock apart and move sand. At the same time, waves transport sand along the coast through longshore drift, continually reshaping beaches.

Fun fact: Some parts of Ghana's coastline lose several metres of land each year due to wave energy — physics literally redraws the map over time.



Why do Mountains Exist? (Himalaya)



This is all about forces and pressure. Huge tectonic plates are constantly moving due to energy inside the Earth. When they collide (not elastic collisions), they exert enormous compressive forces, pushing rock upwards to form mountains. This force is still acting today, which is why the Himalayas continue to rise.

Fun fact: Mount Everest grows by a few millimetres each year — roughly the same speed your fingernails grow!

Why do Deserts Form? (Australia)



This is driven by motion and forces in fluids (air). Wind transfers energy to sand grains, pushing them along the surface. As grains move and collide, friction and gravity cause them to settle into regular patterns. The ripples form because the motion of particles becomes organised by these forces.

Fun fact: These ripples in sand dunes often form at consistent distances apart because the wind creates repeating patterns, almost like a natural physics experiment in wave motion.

This comes down to forces, material strength, and erosion. Rainwater and wind apply small but constant forces to the rock. Softer rock erodes faster, while stronger quartz sandstone resists erosion. Over millions of years, this leaves behind tall, narrow pillars, where the rock's strength balances against gravity pulling it down.

Fun fact: The rock is just strong enough to resist collapsing under its own weight, a real-life example of forces in equilibrium!

How did the Zhangjiajie mountains form? (China)



How do Volcanoes erupt? (Mt Etna, Italy)



This is driven by energy, convection, and pressure. Deep inside the Earth, heat from the core causes molten rock (magma) to move in convection currents. Hotter, less dense material rises, while cooler, denser material sinks. This movement pushes magma toward the surface. As it rises, gases expand, increasing pressure until it is released in an eruption.

Fun fact: Mount Etna is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. Its eruptions are so frequent that scientists use it as a natural laboratory to study volcanic physics.

Why do icebergs float (and why are most of them hidden)? (Russia, Arctic Circle)

This is all about density and upthrust (buoyancy). Ice is less dense than liquid water, so it floats. When an iceberg is in the ocean, the water pushes upward with a force equal to the weight of water displaced (Archimedes' principle).

Only a small part sticks out above the surface because most of the iceberg's mass is needed to balance this force.



Fun fact: About 90% of an iceberg is underwater, which hints at how the density of ice compares to water.

From roaring waterfalls to growing mountains, these landscapes aren't random, they're the result of forces, energy, and motion. In other words... Physics is shaping the world around us.

Teacher Feature

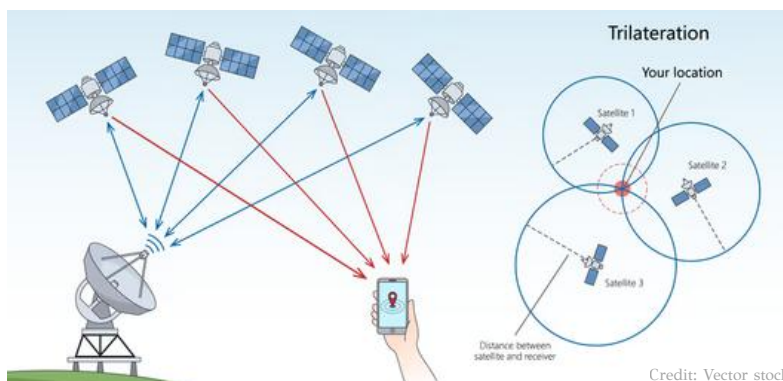
Geography and its Hidden Mathematics

By Mr. Evans, Maths Teacher

Geography is the study of our home, but like any great architecture, it is built on a mathematical framework. Whether it be measuring the height of a mountain or predicting the path of a storm, numbers act as a 'secret language' that allows geographers to describe the Earth.

Every time you use a map app, your phone is solving a geometry problem. It talks to satellites up in space using a method called "trilateration" - can you tell how many satellites it talks to? Hint: triangle, Triceratops, trilogy.

Teacher Feature



Credit: Vector stock

Think of it like this: if you know you are exactly 5 miles from point A, 10 miles from point B, and 8 miles from point C, there is only one specific spot on Earth where you could be. Your phone uses trigonometry (the mathematics of triangles) to calculate those distances in a split second. Without these complex equations, similar to the ones we learn here at Charter, your phone wouldn't even know which side of the street you are on.

Geography also uses mathematics to measure the Earth's power. You've probably heard of the Richter Scale for earthquakes. This isn't just a 1-to-10 list; it is a logarithmic scale. On a normal scale (like a ruler), 2 is twice as much as 1. But on a logarithmic scale, every time the number goes up by one, the value is multiplied by 10. So, a Magnitude 6 earthquake shakes 10 times harder than a Magnitude 5. This mathematical scale helps seismologists (people who study earthquakes) precisely track everything from tiny vibrations we can't even feel to the larger shifts that shape our landscapes.

Finally, to save the beauty until the end, mathematics helps geographers understand the patterns found in nature that are considered to be "perfect". Many geographic features; like the spiral of a hurricane or the way a river winds through a valley; follow a mathematical relationship called the golden ratio.

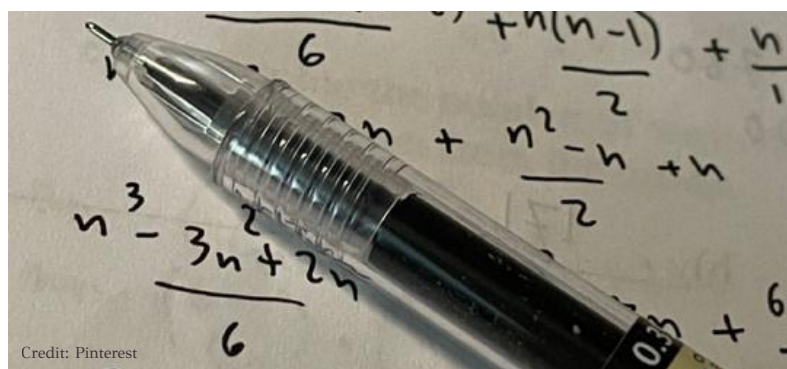


Credit: Pinterest

Golden ratio

This ratio is a mathematical formula that allows nature to move energy and water in the best way possible. That same mathematical pattern guides both the massive symmetry of mountain ranges to the delicate curve of a seashell. It's the hidden pattern nature follows to shape the world around us.

Now remember, the next time you open Maps, take a second to thank the mathematics that's making your world a little easier to navigate.



Credit: Pinterest

Teacher Feature

The Geography of Domesticated Animals

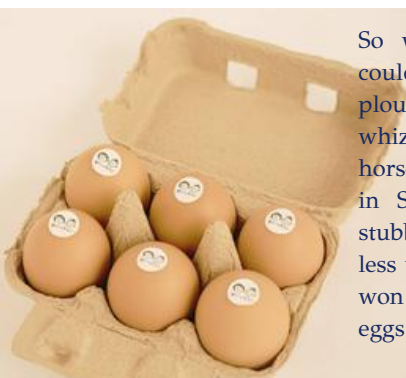
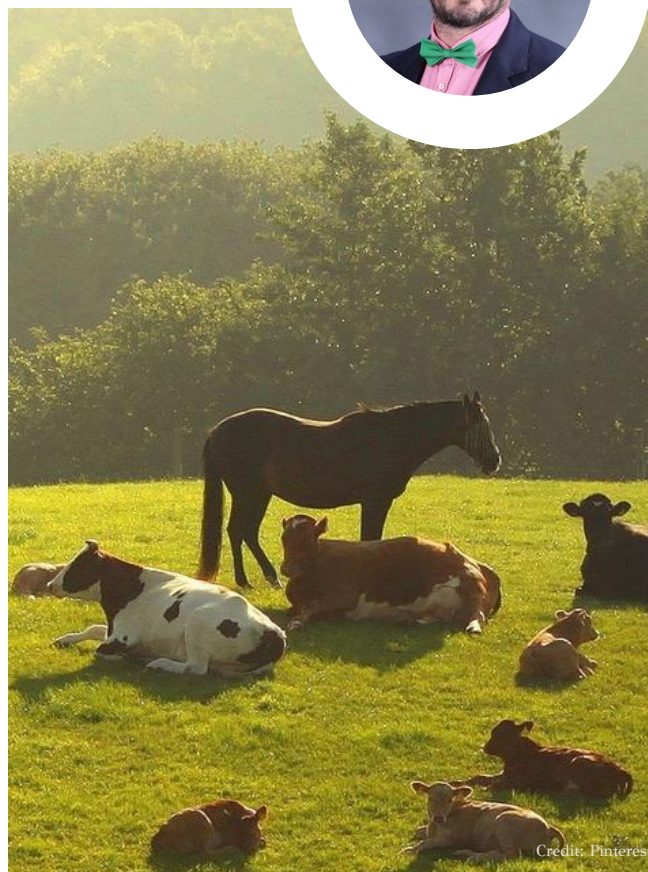
By Mr. Moxey, Geography Teacher

Teacher Feature



What does a zebra's kick have to do with the globalism of McDonald's? A great question I hear you say. Thank you. It all comes down to animals, and particularly the very few species that humans have domesticated.

There are many theories about why it has been predominantly Eurasian cultures (those originating in Europe and Asia) which have been the dominant cultures in shaping the modern world. One aspect of their success comes down to the animal species they were able to domesticate. Over thousands of years humans have only really domesticated about 14 species, and most of those (and all the most useful ones) have been in Europe or Asia. Domesticated animals have many uses; they can be eaten, they can be milked or encouraged to lay eggs, they can pull or carry far more than a human, and their skin can be used for leather, and their horns for really cool helmet decorations.



So while Asian and European cultures could use oxen or buffalo to pull heavy ploughs and thus create more food, or whiz along at 50kph on the back of a horse whilst enjoying a boiled egg, people in South America were stuck with the stubborn Alpaca and Llama which are far less useful. They can't carry as much, they won't pull anything and they don't lay eggs!



Further north, many attempts had been made by the people of North America to domesticate buffalo. Should be easy right? They're basically giant cows wearing a winter coat. WRONG! When cows are scared, much like a group of year 11s at break time, they herd together which makes it easy to keep them moving in one direction. However buffalo do the opposite and scatter, like teachers after a staff meeting. Now, you do not want loads of 1000kg buffalo scattering all through your village and squashing dear old Granny grey beard.

Africa also had it tough; zebras may look like cute ponies in stripy pyjamas but they are vicious and aggressive with a kick that can kill a lion and a bite that can defang a crocodile. Australia had nothing that could be domesticated either, as well as the fact that most things in Australia will try to kill you in terrible ways even if you try and leave them alone.

So how does this link to McDonalds? Well, McDonalds is a good example of how western culture has been able to spread around the world because of previous expansion. And part of the reason those countries could go off conquering is because they had the animals and the plentiful food supply to help them. So think about that the next time you're enjoying some chicky nuggs.

Climate Change: A Global Crisis

Combating Climate Change: What Can YOU Do?

By Proud Year 13

"THAT'S ONE SMALL
STEP FOR MAN, ONE
GIANT LEAP FOR
MANKIND."

— NEIL ARMSTRONG

Credit: iStock

Now, I know what you're thinking: what does the first moon landing have to do with climate change? Stick around to find out...

Climate change is one of the biggest problems of the century. Yet, how many of us hear about climate change on the news, think "Oh no, that's not good," and carry on with our lives without doing anything about it? That's the problem. Not enough people are taking action. Some people might feel that climate change doesn't affect them. Some of us might want to do something, but don't know how to help. Others might feel like nothing they do will make a difference. Climate change is a global crisis, after all — what could one person, let alone one student, possibly do?

As it turns out, more than you might think. Anyone can become a climate activist, and here are 8 small, simple things you can do to make a big impact on the climate movement.

1. If you're not using it, turn it off

This one might seem pretty obvious, but it makes a huge difference. Leaving the tap running while brushing your teeth or leaving your lights on unnecessarily are both unsuspecting contributors to your emissions... and your electricity bill!

2. Switch it up

Making small substitutions can go a long way. If you haven't already, consider replacing incandescent light bulbs with LED lights, which use 90% less energy and last 25 times longer. Even switching up the AC a few degrees can reduce energy consumption. You can even switch to using a fan instead during the cooler hours of the day.

3. Travel greener

If you are able to, walking or cycling instead of driving is a great way to reduce your emissions. It's great for the environment and great for your health, too. Alternatively, you can opt for public transport.

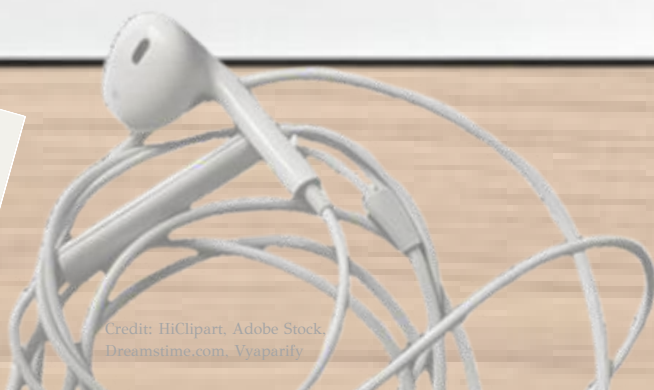
Planes are generally the most polluting form of transportation due to the massive distances they cover. Therefore, the best way to cut down on flight emissions is to simply fly less to begin with. Consider planning longer, less frequent trips instead.

4. Eat greener — literally

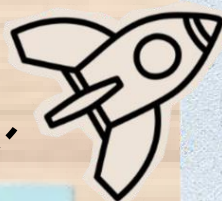
Not only are vegetables great for your health, they also have a much smaller carbon footprint than meat and processed foods. This doesn't mean you have to completely give up eating meat, though; even one meat-free meal a week can save a lot of emissions.

5. Compost

Investing in a composting bin can go a long way. Just throw your food scraps in and wait — your plants will love the organic fertiliser! You can even try growing your own vegetables! Lettuce, tomatoes, green beans, basil and chives are some easy vegetables and herbs to start with.



Credit: HiClipart, Adobe Stock, Dreamstime.com, Vyapariv



6. Choose your clothes wisely

With the ongoing fast-fashion trends, massive amounts of water, fabric and energy are used each year to produce clothes that will only be worn a few times. When shopping for clothes, opt for timeless pieces that won't go out of style. A good investment can last you years!

7. Reduce, reuse, recycle

This one might sound really cliché, but it's true:

- Reduce the amount of waste you produce in the first place. Bring your own reusable bags and cups when you go shopping and only buy what you need; if you keep forgetting to bring your bags, try leaving them somewhere you'll notice them, like by your front door.
- Reuse what you have and try to repair or repurpose damaged items if you can, or consider donating to charity instead of throwing things out.
- Whenever possible, consider choosing products that have been made from recycled or sustainably sourced materials. Properly sorting and disposing of your waste can also save a lot of recyclable materials from ending up in landfills.

8. Make it trend

Social media is a powerful tool. The only difference between the climate crisis and other social media trends is that it doesn't end if it "falls out of trend", so let's keep climate action circulating on the internet! Awareness starts with visibility.



Credit: Pinterest

Why Should You Even Care?

Because the problem is right here at home. You are being affected by climate change right now as you read this article. It was cold in Bangkok last winter, and we all know how hot it will get in the summer. We've been seeing more droughts and floods all over the country; you've probably even driven through a flooded road a few times. It might not seem like a huge problem right now, but it's only going to get worse from here. We are much luckier than many people around the world. Think back to the shock, fear or confusion you felt during the earthquake last March — that's how most people feel during a hurricane or wildfire, too. And that's the danger that thousands are living with every day because of climate change. It's affecting students like you and me. It's affecting schools like Charter. It's affecting everyone.

One Small Step

So what does climate change have in common with the first moon landing? Well, the Apollo 11 mission started with someone simply asking a question: can we put a human on the moon? And then people took action. Those actions eventually made history when Armstrong first set foot on the moon. The same concept can be applied to climate change. Yes, it is a huge problem. Yes, it can be scary. Yes, at times it can feel impossible to solve. But the moon landing once seemed impossible, too. All it takes is a single person taking the first step. YOU can be that person. Sure, it's not much to begin with, but if everyone at Charter also takes one small step, that's one giant leap for our school community. Big things take time, but every big thing starts with a single, small action. So — what will you be doing today to help the environment?

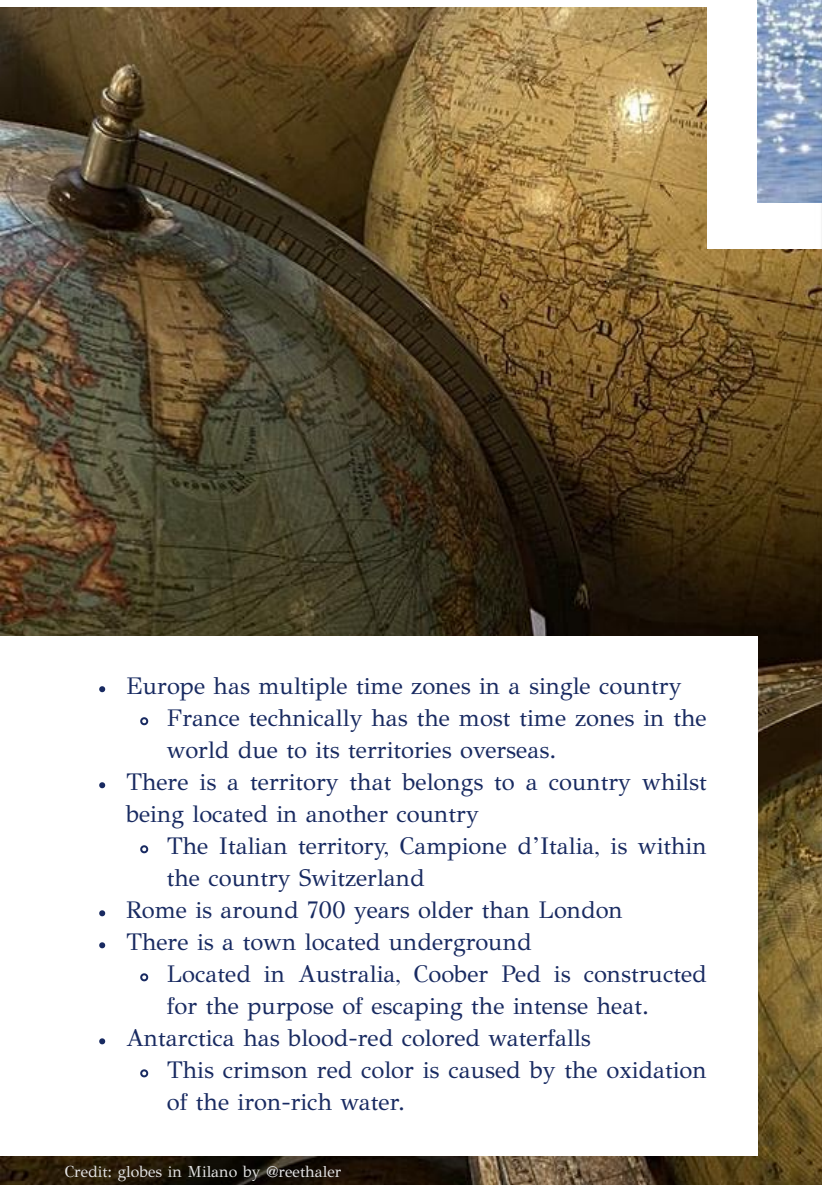


Credit: Pinterest,
Adobe Stock

Geography, But Make it Fun

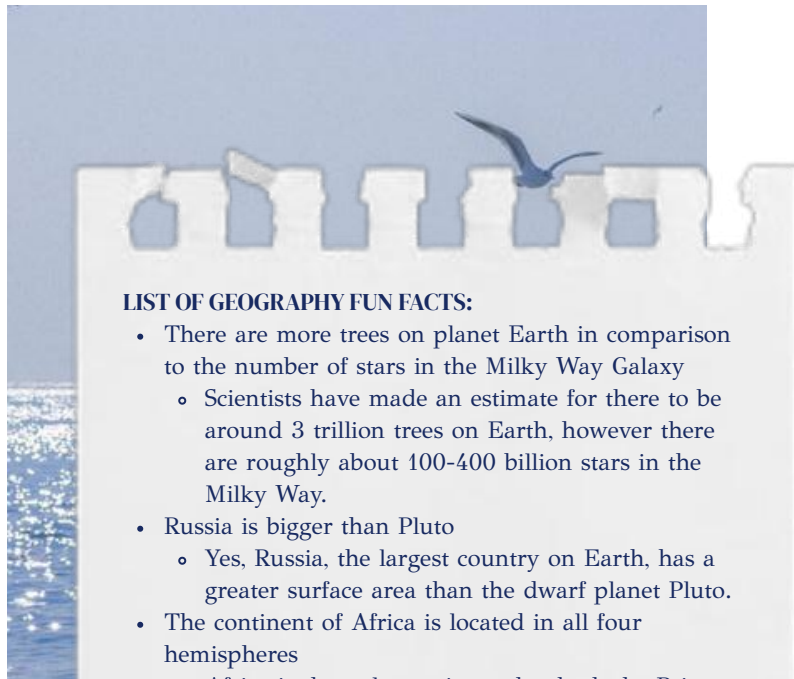
By Ferng Year 11

Did you think that geography is only about maps and the memorisation of capitals? You might have to think again, as our world is much more fascinating and filled with peculiar knowledge than what textbooks contain.



- Europe has multiple time zones in a single country
 - France technically has the most time zones in the world due to its territories overseas.
- There is a territory that belongs to a country whilst being located in another country
 - The Italian territory, Campione d'Italia, is within the country Switzerland
- Rome is around 700 years older than London
- There is a town located underground
 - Located in Australia, Coober Ped is constructed for the purpose of escaping the intense heat.
- Antarctica has blood-red colored waterfalls
 - This crimson red color is caused by the oxidation of the iron-rich water.

Credit: globes in Milano by @reethaler



LIST OF GEOGRAPHY FUN FACTS:

- There are more trees on planet Earth in comparison to the number of stars in the Milky Way Galaxy
 - Scientists have made an estimate for there to be around 3 trillion trees on Earth, however there are roughly about 100-400 billion stars in the Milky Way.
- Russia is bigger than Pluto
 - Yes, Russia, the largest country on Earth, has a greater surface area than the dwarf planet Pluto.
- The continent of Africa is located in all four hemispheres
 - Africa is the only continent that both the Prime Meridian and the Equator cross, which places it in all four hemispheres.
- Did you know that it is possible to stand in three countries at once?
 - These positions are known as tripoints, which are located along some borders, where you can have, literally, a foot placed in another country at the same time.
- The Sahara wasn't always a desert filled with sand
 - Thousands of years ago, the Sahara desert was filled with greenery, lakes, animals and communities.
- Antarctica is actually the driest place on Earth
 - Even though Antarctica is covered in ice and is extremely cold, its lack of precipitation technically makes it incredibly dry.
- The well-known Mount Everest is not the tallest mountain if viewed from the base to the crest
 - This title would actually be given to Mauna Kea located in Hawaii, although most of it is underwater.
- There's a town named "Truth or Consequences"
 - Located in New Mexico, USA
- Australia is actually wider than the moon
 - The width of Australia is around 4,000 kilometers wide, while the moon is approximately 3,474 kilometers in diameter.
- The North Pole is not a part of any country
 - This is because it is international territory.

84% of the World's Reefs are Bleaching

By Julia Year 13

The world's coral reefs are facing a serious environmental crisis. Scientists have confirmed that the largest coral bleaching event in recorded history is happening now. Recent data shows that about 84% of the world's coral reefs have been affected by high levels of bleaching due to heat stress caused by rising ocean temperatures. Coral bleaching is when corals turn white as a result of losing the tiny algae living inside them. This usually happens when ocean temperature rises and stresses the coral. Without the algae, the coral loses color and its main source of food. It can happen for several reasons, including warmer sea temperatures, too much sunlight, ocean acidification, and pollution.

This global bleaching event began in early 2023 and has spread across the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, affecting reefs from the Caribbean to the Great Barrier Reef. Coral bleaching has serious environmental impacts. When coral dies, many marine species lose their homes and food sources, which leads to a decrease in biodiversity and disrupts marine food chains.

Coral bleaching also affects people, especially those living near coastal areas. Many coastal communities rely on reef fish as an important source of food. In addition, coral reefs support tourism as millions of people visit them each year for activities such as snorkelling and diving. Coral reefs also help protect coastlines by absorbing wave energy and limiting damage from storms. When reefs are damaged, coastal areas become more vulnerable to erosion, flooding, and storm impact.

If coral bleaching continues at this rate, many reefs could disappear within this century. Frequent heat stress makes it difficult for coral to recover, which can result in permanent damage. In the future, the loss of coral reefs could affect ocean ecosystems worldwide and threaten the food supply and livelihoods of millions of people.



The Sinking City

By Nampetch Year 13

Jakarta is Indonesia's massive capital. Home to 11 million people, Jakarta sits on the Northwest coast of Java Island and acts as the economic, cultural, and political centre of Indonesia. It is ASEAN's second-largest economy after Singapore. Its architecture, language, and cuisine are influenced by a historic mix of Javanese, Malay, Chinese, Arab, Indian, and European cultures. Jakarta also has 13 rivers flowing through it, which are critical for trade, agriculture, and urban life, with the most prominent river being the Ciliwung River.



Credit: Pinterest

Jakarta is extremely prone to flooding due to its physical geography. The city lies on a flat, low-lying alluvial plain ranging from -2 m to 91 m in elevation, with an average height of only about 8 m above sea level. Much of the land consists of former swamps and reclaimed tidal flats, particularly in northern coastal areas. As a result, even small increases in sea level or rainfall can lead to widespread inundation.

Jakarta's vulnerability has been intensified by its colonial past. In the 17th century, In the European colonial era, the Dutch colonised Indonesia in the 1600s and established Batavia. They built canals everywhere in an attempt to recreate Amsterdam in the tropics. These canals were used for trade, defence, and segregation by dividing the grid into groups. The main canal, called 'The Groot', divided the city into the eastern and western parts. The Dutch were outnumbered by the local and migrant populations, so they divided it and left every group confined to their city quarter.

In the 1700s, changes in climate and a lack of maintenance caused the canals to deteriorate. Various issues arose, such as stagnant waters (blockages due to sediment), disease outbreaks (typhus, malaria), and continual flooding. The Dutch then moved away from the area, leaving the canals untreated.

In the 1870s, the first centralised water supply was developed with water pipes connecting to each home. Although they provided clean water, they were installed only in areas where the Dutch had settled, leaving the indigenous population in informal settlements known as 'kampongs'. This created a new kind of division in the city as segregation was implemented in indoor bathrooms, and access to clean water. Natives relied on street vendors for water but were often forced to turn to the neglected canals until finally, communal standpipes were installed. This gave birth to the mentality amongst the Dutch that native people were uncivilised and unsanitary.

In 1945, when Indonesia gained independence, rural to urban migration was rapid, causing the population to explode in search of job opportunities. The lack of planning for this created a sprawling city where new settlements popped up along riverbanks, concrete consumed green spaces, and a huge water demand was created, causing people to start drilling for it.

Excessive groundwater pumping is the main driver of Jakarta's rapid sinking. Water is drawn from underground aquifers, causing the land above to compact and subside. In some northern districts, subsidence reaches up to 25 cm per year, while the city average ranges between 3.5 cm and 15 cm annually. Parts of North Jakarta have sunk more than 4 m in recent decades.

The problem is worsened by extensive urbanisation. Concrete surfaces prevent rainwater from infiltrating the ground and replenishing aquifers, accelerating depletion. Although extraction is often illegal, enforcement is weak. A survey by Indonesia's anti-corruption agency identified over 10,000 illegal wells, and inspections in central business districts found many large buildings also pumping groundwater without permits.



Land subsidence greatly increases flood risk. Combined with tropical monsoon rainfall and high tides, Jakarta experiences severe and prolonged flooding, especially in coastal areas. A major flood in 2007 caused around 80 deaths and water levels of up to 2 m in some districts.

Coastal communities face repeated damage to homes and infrastructure. In fishing settlements, residents frequently rebuild after floods, while some traditional villages have been demolished to make way for redevelopment. Displaced residents are often relocated to high-rise housing far inland, separating them from their livelihoods.

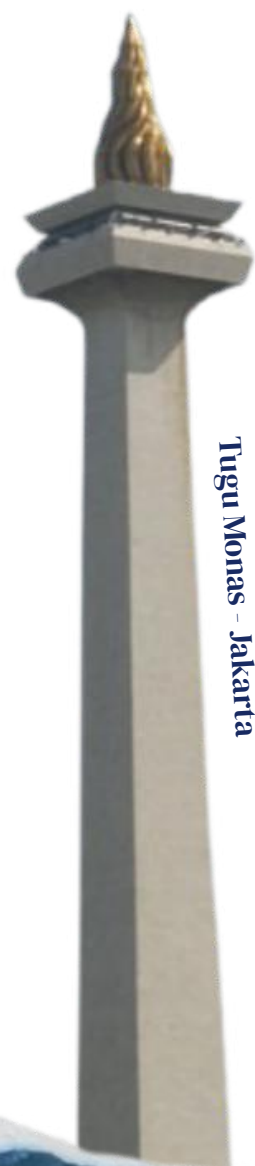
Visible impacts of subsidence include tilted buildings, cracked roads, and permanently flooded ground floors. In some areas, abandoned commercial properties and uneven market walkways highlight the ongoing deformation of the land surface.

Various solutions have been proposed to slow or stop Jakarta's sinking. These include restricting groundwater extraction, improving piped water infrastructure, and developing alternative water sources. Similar policies have successfully reduced subsidence in cities such as Tokyo and Shanghai.

The Indonesian government has also considered relocating the national capital to Borneo, though this would not solve the problems facing Jakarta's existing population.

A major engineering response is the planned construction of a giant coastal defence system across Jakarta Bay. This project, sometimes called the "Giant Sea Wall," would integrate artificial islands and floodgates to protect the city from rising seas and storm surges. However, the scheme is extremely expensive, technically complex, and environmentally controversial. Critics warn it could trap polluted river water, damage marine ecosystems, and require continuous maintenance as the land continues to subside.

Jakarta's sinking is the result of both natural vulnerability and human activity, particularly uncontrolled groundwater extraction and rapid urbanisation. Without major improvements in water management, regulation, and infrastructure, flooding and land subsidence are likely to worsen. Although large-scale engineering projects may provide temporary protection, long-term solutions will require sustainable water use and effective urban planning.



Credit: Pinterest

Magic in La Paz

By Suji Year 10

Hidden in the city of La Paz, Bolivia, sits one of South America's most unique markets: Mercado de las Brujas, widely known as the Witches' Market. Located near Calle Linares in the centre of the city, the market is known for selling traditional and peculiar items which are closely connected to Bolivia's indigenous heritage. Although the name may sound mysterious, the market isn't about fictional witches, but traditional healers and spiritual experts who have been part of Bolivia's culture for centuries.

La Paz sits more than 3,500 meters above sea level in the Andes Mountains, making it one of the highest capital cities in the world. The Witches' Market is filled with small colourful shops that are placed along narrow and steep streets. Bundles of dried plants hang above doorways, and shelves are stocked with extraordinary objects. The atmosphere of the market is lively and crowded, attracting tons of international tourists as well as locals. Some visitors come to the market due to curiosity, and some visit to purchase items that are used in everyday living.

The market sells a wide variety of products linked to Aymara traditions, which is one of Bolivia's main indigenous cultures. Vendors, also known as yatiris, are traditional healers in Bolivian culture. They offer dried herbs that are used in natural medicine, incense for ceremonies, and small amulets which are believed to bring protection, luck, love, or even financial prosperity. People often attach miniature objects such as tiny houses, bags of rice, or fake money to the statue to represent the things they hope to have in their lives.

One of the most well-known and extraordinary items sold at the market is dried llama foetuses. In traditional practices, these are buried beneath new buildings as a part of a blessing ceremony. This tradition is linked to Pachamama, often translated as "Mother Earth", who represents nature and fertility in Andean culture. In addition to protective charms, some shops also sell items believed to remove bad luck, or even place curses on enemies. While this may seem unusual or dramatic, some products reflect beliefs about balancing good and bad fortune rather than simply causing harm.

Today, the Witches' Market represents more than just trade. Around 40% of Bolivia's population identifies as indigenous, and traditions continue to influence daily life. The market demonstrates how ancient practices have adapted within a modern urban environment. It remains where culture, history, and business meet. The Witches' Market stands as one of the most distinctive attractions in La Paz. The combination of tradition, belief, and everyday life offers insight into Bolivia's rich cultural identity. Rather than being simply strange or mysterious, it shows how deeply rooted traditions continue to shape the country today.



Credit: Fringinto

All About the Nipah Virus

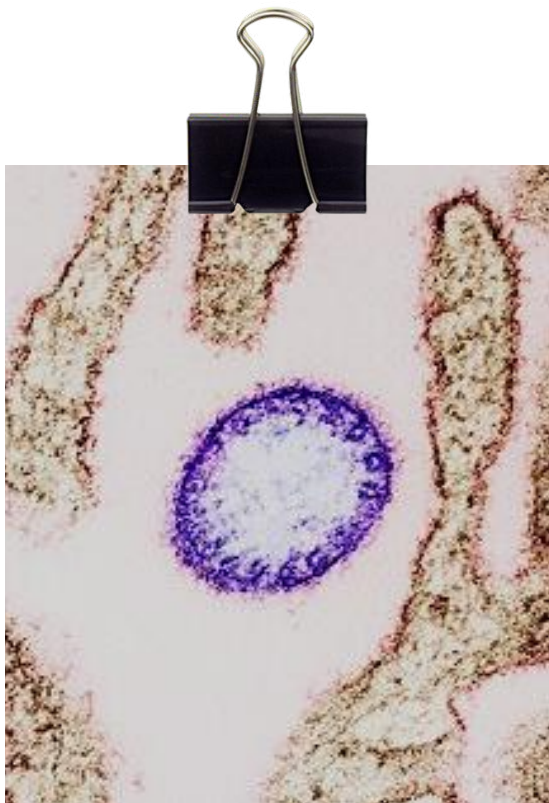
By Alice Year 13

The Nipah virus is a zoonotic virus in the genus Henipavirus. This means that this virus can be transmitted from animals such as bats or pigs to humans. Recently, there has been a new outbreak of this virus in December 2025 in India, in the state of West Bengal. Out of 198 people, there were 2 confirmed cases. Although only two cases were reported, this virus is deadly as it can lead to encephalitis, which is the inflammation of the brain, as well as meningitis which affects the brain and the spinal cord leading to more serious injuries and cognitive disabilities. It has an estimated mortality rate of 40-75% and can leave some survivors with neurological difficulties such as seizures and personality changes. This virus also doesn't have any vaccines, so treatment is limited for those with severe symptoms of this infection.

The Nipah virus isn't actually a recent virus despite being in the news lately. The first ever recorded case was in 1998 in Malaysia among pig farmers, which later then spread to Singapore, their neighbouring country. In this outbreak, more than 100 people died, and millions of pigs were slaughtered to contain the virus. This impacted the farmers and their livestock, damaging the economy.

There were several other outbreaks throughout the years in Bangladesh and India. Currently, no cases have been reported outside of India, and in January 2026, Thailand started to screen passengers at international airports. Many countries are also adopting similar precautionary measures to contain this outbreak. There are currently no reported cases in Thailand, and the two cases from West Bengal have been contained.

The screening done in Thailand and other countries, such as Taiwan, was effective but there are still other ways to prevent this virus from spreading. Since it is a zoonotic virus, avoiding contact with bats and sick animals is imperative for not accidentally spreading the disease. Additionally, practising good hygiene, like washing fruit that has been touched or eaten by animals, or wearing gloves when dealing with these animals will also help stop this virus from breaking out.



C U L T U R E
S P O T L I G H T



CULTURE SPOTLIGHT

Featuring:

- Teacher (attempting to) learn Thai at Charter
- All about Songkran
- Mae Nak Phra Khanong (แม่ทวดพระโขนง)
- Thailand Lights Up for the New Year



Teacher Feature

Teachers (attempting to) Learn Thai at Charter

By Miss Carter, English Teacher

I've always been fascinated by and interested in languages. Perhaps it stems from a time during my childhood when my family and I moved to Spain, throwing me into the rolling hills and harsh 'j' sounds of Spanish alongside the locals around me. I was an eight-year-old girl in a foreign country and had to learn the language of the natives in order to learn anything at school. Quite a challenge, it would seem. Surprisingly, my sister and I picked it up quickly, formed friendships at school, and continued studying it into GCSE upon returning to the UK. Back in British school, others that I shared the classroom with seemed to feel forced to learn a European language, and often, it can seem that children can take for granted the privilege of it. But it was during my early adulthood that I neglected to continue my Spanish learning, and as a result, I have realised it can be just as quick to forget as it is to learn.

Thai, on the other hand, is something that I now proudly enjoy learning, albeit very badly and slowly! Yet something learning Thai has in common with my past of learning Spanish is this: taking advantage of the local language of where you live is to be explored, enjoyed, and embraced. The difference is that this time it's a choice. I don't have to, but I think it is important to. I suppose living here and being an English teacher also influences my interest. Without going too far down the grammar rabbit hole, learning Spanish helped me learn English better, and now I can compare the formation of words and sentences in Thai and appreciate how it's taught and compares. And that's the beauty of learning languages side-by-side; it's a bilingual's superpower.

Learning Thai presents many challenges, and I doubt this will be anything new for anyone to hear. I'd say the most complicated element is not remembering the word or the phrase, it's the tone, as Thai and English are not related languages at all. I could confidently deliver a line, yet if the tone is off or completely wrong, then it will go over anyone's head. The Thai script includes 15 vowels, with many tone variations of each. Whereas the English Latin alphabet only changes by stress and context (iambic pentameter would be a good example of stress/non-stressed syllables, or a Northern English person (like myself) elongating any vowel, perhaps). Aside from five different tones attached to the word "Mai" (ไม, ไหม, ไม่, มี, ไหม), the most fascinating difference to me is Thai's lack of tenses. Initially, I thought this would be harder, yet I suppose there is less opportunity to understand and teach the irregularities and misconceptions of verb conjugations.



Despite the challenges of Thai, like having to move your jaw in a certain way to pronounce that you're tired, and the aforementioned endless tones to try and remember, there are many benefits that come with language learning, and learning a language that is so dissimilar to my own. Since I've started puzzling sentences together, and trying to remember the phrases from my Wednesday classes that sometimes slip away before Thursday arrives, I feel more connected to people around me. From Thai staff, students, and parents to people in my area, shops, restaurants, and other services I use, I feel more a part of Thailand. Learning a language becomes part of who you are—it shapes how you express yourself, connects you with others, and helps you develop patience, resilience, and confidence.

Even as teachers, learning never ends. “การเรียนรู้ไม่มีที่สิ้นสุด”

Teacher Feature



Sawasdee ka readers.
It's Kru Carter here.
สวัสดีผู้อ่านทุกคน
นี่คือครุคาร์เตอร์

All about Songkran

By Miki & TJ Year 7

Every April, Thailand turns into a big water-splashing party. Everyone across the country comes together to have fun and preserve the ancient traditions of Songkran. But believe it or not, behind water splashes lies a beautiful tradition full of meaning.

Songkran is one of Thailand's most important cultural festivals and marks the traditional Thai New Year. It is celebrated every year from April 13th to 15th and is a major public holiday across the country. The festival represents renewal, happiness, and good fortune, bringing people together in both spiritual and joyful ways. Songkran is also deeply connected to respect for elders, family unity, and gratitude.



Photo credit: Suddhorn Midtown Hotel

The word Songkran comes from Sanskrit, which means “to move forward” or “to step into a new cycle.” The festival has been celebrated for centuries and is shared across parts of Southeast Asia, including Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. During the ceremony, people wear floral shirts with colourful flowers. While modern celebrations are famous for water fights, colour fights also take place but are not as popular. In Thai culture, water represents purification — washing away bad luck and welcoming a fresh start. Popular dishes to eat during Songkran are Khao Chae, which is rice in jasmine-scented cold water, Som tum, grilled meat and street food such as skewers, sausages and snacks during outdoor celebrations. Thai sweets and fruit platters also help people cool down in the summer.

The first day, April 13th, is known as Wan Maha Songkran, the official beginning of the new year. This day focuses on cleansing and preparation. Thai families clean their homes to remove bad luck and create space for a new beginning. People believe that how the first day of the year is spent influences the rest of the year ahead, so activities are calm, mindful, and respectful.

Many visit temples to make merit by offering food to monks and praying for good fortune. A key ritual is gently pouring scented water over Buddha statues to symbolize spiritual purification. Younger family members also pour perfumed water over the hands of elders in a ceremony called Rod Nam Dam Hua, asking for blessings and forgiveness. This strengthens family bonds and honors respect between generations.

The second day, April 14th, is called Wan Nao. It emphasizes reconnection with family and community. Family and relatives gather at temples to make merit together. A special tradition of this day is building sand pagodas inside temple grounds, symbolizing the return of soil that was carried away from the temples during the year. Water celebrations become more visible in public areas. Overall, Wan Nao represents harmony, respect, and strengthening relationships.



Photo credit: GetYo

The third day, known as Wan Thaloeng Sok, is the most festive and energetic day of the festival. It symbolizes joy and celebration, including public unity and water fights. Street festivals, music, parades, and water celebrations are at their peak. Cities like Chiang Mai, Bangkok, and Phuket hold large community events. The playful water splashing symbolizes washing away the final traces of the old year and welcoming happiness. This tradition developed over time as the gentle pouring of water turned into water splashing in the streets. Today, the water fights represent joy, unity, and letting go of negativity from the past year.



Although splashing water at friends is great fun, you shouldn't use cold water. Even though you meant it as a joke or a harmless prank, putting ice in water you use to splash people could turn a nice fun happy splash into a brutal, unhappy fight which is not what we want. Some places have rules that do not allow ice or water guns, especially in schools or locations with vulnerable groups. These rules help keep Songkran safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Speaking of being safe and enjoyable for everyone, we think of schools like ours where Charter has been preparing for the Songkran festival. Everyone is welcome to join us. The event is on the 3rd of April, which is a half-day, meaning you get to go home early! Yippee!!!

There will be merit making (ตักบาตร) in the morning, where you are welcome to bring any food or necessities to offer to the monks. After that, there will be primary students' performances. After the wonderful show, there will be a Rod Nam Dam Hua ceremony (รดน้ำดำหัว), keeping in line with the beautiful Songkran tradition where students will pour water onto a teacher's hand and the teacher will give them blessings. When all of this is done, a big water party will be held on the football field. But there are rules to ensure that you will have not only a fun water fight, but also a safe one. Those rules are simply that you can't use water guns or paint powder. After everything is done we all get to have a well rested break and go home.

Today, Songkran attracts millions of visitors from around the world. Tourists join locals in water fights, street festivals, and temple visits. However, visitors are encouraged to dress modestly near temples, respecting the Buddhas and monks as well.

That is all for today. We hope you all have a prosperous, peaceful rest and a fun holiday break with loads of happiness. We will see you all later!

Happy Songkran!!!



Mae Nak Phra Khanong (แม่นาคพระโขนง)

By Miki & TJ Year 7



Mae Nak Phra Khanong is a legend from Thai culture, which is based on a woman who lived in that era during the reign of King Rama III (during the 1800s). The story is about love, tragedy and supernatural devotion between a couple in which one died and became a ghost and one who did not know about it until he found out by himself while spending time with his ghost wife.

Long ago, in Phra Khanong, lived a man and his wife. Their names were Mak (มาก), the husband and Nak (นาค), the wife. Mak and Nak loved each other so much. Way too much, the neighbours had never seen one without the other. Unexpectedly, a war began in Siam and Mak was forced to leave to join the army and fight. Nak was left behind, eventually pregnant.

Before he left, Mak held Nak's hand and promised her one thing. He would come back to Nak and their child no matter what. Nak had promised too. "I'll wait. I'll wait until you get back, and everything will go back to normal." Nak and Mak smiled sadly at each other, and just like that, they parted. She watched as her husband disappeared beyond the bushes.

The war was brutal. It seemed like decades passed. Back at the village, Nak went into labour. She did not survive. Neither did their child. But Nak refused to leave, even as a spirit. Her love made her stay put at the canal. Her soul stayed, cooking, cleaning, waiting. She acted like death was no big deal and continued waiting for the love of her life. Meanwhile, the neighbours had left and abandoned the village, making the zone look haunted.

Months later, the war was fought. It was over. Mak returned home after all these months apart from his wife. When he reached home, he saw Nak holding a baby as if nothing ever happened. "Mak, you're finally back!" she exclaimed joyously. Mak was none the wiser. For love can make a person blind. They lived happily together once again. Nak cooked. Mak worked. The baby cried. The villagers knew the truth. They saw Nak floating. They heard her laugh echoing. The dogs howled. Chickens died. Nobody ever dared to step near her house.

The folks at the market were unwilling to sell things to Mak because of the ghost he was staying with. Mak laughed and brushed it off, saying it was just a "harmless little joke". But Mak himself was getting a little suspicious. Soon, he started to see that the house was emptier and the village was no longer loud. It was like something had scared them off. Of course, he didn't think it was his wife.

One day, he was bathing in the river. In the distance, he saw his friends from the village row their boats towards him. He was excited to see them. But unexpectedly, they seemed frightened and paddled away. There were also days when he went to the market and heard people talk about spirits in his home. He didn't jump into conclusion straight away but was still cautious.

A few weeks passed, and he invited his friends to his house to live with him. The friends were the same ones who fought alongside him as soldiers in the war. Their names were Ter, Puak, Shin, and Aey. Ter is the nervous one. Shin is a clever planner. Puak is big, loud, brave, and Aey is the smooth talker. Mak and his friends played cards, told jokes and ate. When his friends suspect the rumor to be true, they decide to investigate. Nak wasn't going to reveal her identity, keeping quiet. Then one day, when Mak's friends weren't at the house..

Nak was making food for her husband and his friends until she dropped a lime. She watched it roll down into the hole on the floor. She didn't want to get it because she had back pain. She looked around to make sure no one was near and used her magic to stretch out her hand and grab the lime. One of Mak's friends saw it while coming back to the house and was scared out of his mind.

They knew Nak was a ghost. They knew Mak wouldn't believe them easily. They needed evidence. They began searching the house. Some saw bones and corpses, but were unsure. Every time they tried to find the truth, they were disrupted by Nak's power.



Mak was the foolish one, too, not believing his friends. Mak refused to accept that Nak was a ghost. Then Shin told his friends that if you looked between your own legs, you would see who the ghost and Ter tried it and failed. You know why, because he looked under Nak's legs, not his and got caught a bit awkwardly. Puek was also panicked and was planning to go away, but most of Mak's friends weren't going to let Mak stay with Nak's spirit alone.

Then Mak started to believe that Nak was a ghost when the boys were on the boat and they were discussing who was going to be the ghost because they weren't really true until Aey admitted that he was the ghost but wasn't actually he was not and kicked him in the river then Ter looked between his legs and he saw it was true that Nak was a ghost and stretch her arm to Mak which they abandoned ship and to ran to the temple where the monk hold up a ritual and surrounded them with enchanted tread candles and holy water and rice which they prepare. The abbot knew that Nak died during childbirth, and at that time, Mak was still unconscious because he had hurt his wound when he was shot in the war.

He lay there, and when Puek thought Mak was overhead, it was just the water dripping from nowhere, donating money to fix the roof, which made him almost pooped his pants. Then Nak stormed in the front door, and he eventually pooped his pants. The abbot asked Shin to bring the holy water and splashed it on Nak. This made her even angrier, and from the commotion, Mak awakened, and the friends had to stop Mak stopping them from hurting Nak. The four friends and the abbot sat there trying their best to make Nak's spirits vanish while Aey was trying to find his way out of the river.

Then Ter spilt the holy water on Puek, and Shin fed the holy rice to the birds, which made them angry and accidentally kicked the abbot out of the tread which the abbot ran away, and Aey came back and told them that he was not a ghost and it was true. Then it was a final showdown with the friends asking Nak to go well and accepting that she was dead. They argued, but in the end, Mak told Nak that he knew all along that Nak was a ghost, but loved her so much that he didn't want to abandon her. Nak also accepted that she was dead, and she wanted to stay with Mak as long as possible.

They both knew that they couldn't stay together because it was not natural, but her spirit went away happily and visited her husband every day and stayed with him until they got old. They went to the circus and acted in the haunted house, fixed the temple roof and had fun for the rest of their lives and lived happily ever after.

This story represents a love-tragedy story of the dead and undead deciding their own fate in their relationship. Nowadays, the statue of Mae Nak is still at Wat Mahabut in Phra Kanong. This story has encouraged films and stories to adapt and make them more friendly and full of love. We have based the story on the 2013 movie because the original was not appropriate and scary. Nak's and Mak's doing is a symbol of never-ending love and childbirth, which makes everything possible and enduring to the last moment.



Thailand Lights Up for the New Year

By Serena Year 8

Thailand started 2026 with a bang, showing the world why it is one of the best places to party. From the bright lights of Bangkok to the quiet beaches in the south, millions of people gathered to say goodbye to 2025 and hello to a brand-new year.

A Sky Full of Fire and Drones

In Bangkok, the Chao Phraya River was the place to be. Massive crowds filled the riverside to watch a show that combined old-fashioned fireworks with new technology. At ICONSIAM, thousands of drones flew into the air, moving together to create giant 3D shapes and messages of hope in the night sky.

Not far away, at the new One Bangkok center, K-Pop stars like Taeyong and YUTA performed for screaming fans. As the clock hit midnight, the city shook with the sound of fireworks that could be seen from miles away. It wasn't just Bangkok, though; cities like Phuket and Chiang Mai also had huge countdowns with live music and food markets that stayed open until the early morning.

Welcoming the Year of the Horse

Just a few weeks later, the celebrations started all over again for Chinese New Year. This year is the Year of the Horse, which people believe will bring energy, travel, and fast progress.

Chinese New Year is a huge deal in Thailand because so many people here have Chinese roots. The festival was officially celebrated on February 17, but the fun lasted for days. If you walked through any "Chinatown" area, you would have seen a sea of red and gold. People wear these colors because they believe it brings good luck and scares away bad spirits.

How the Festival is Celebrated:

The Day of Spending

Families go out to buy lots of food, fresh fruit, and red decorations.

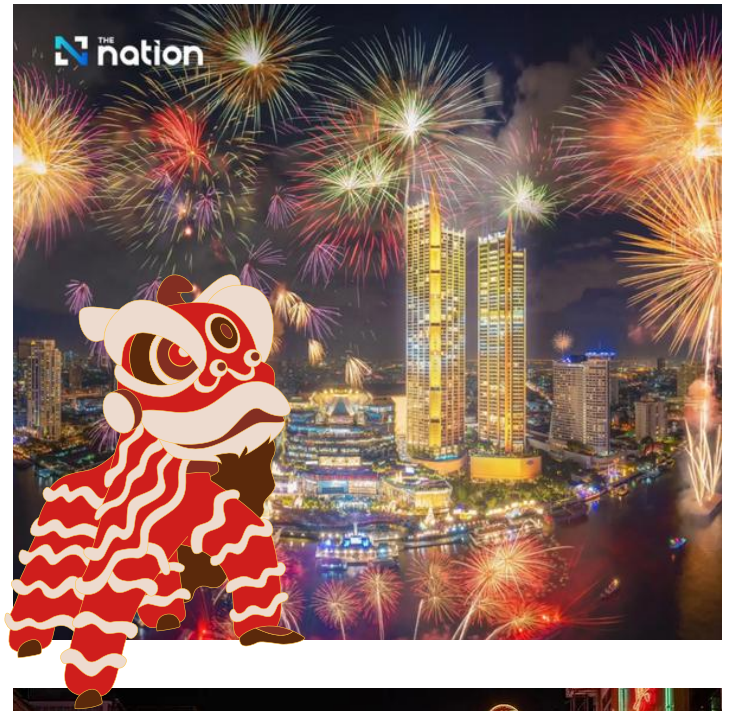
The Day of Worship

This is a serious time. Families set up tables with food and incense to honor their ancestors, and pray for a good year.

The Day of Travel

This is the fun part! People put on their best red clothes and visit relatives. Children are especially happy because they receive Ang Pao, red envelopes filled with "lucky money."

In Bangkok's Yaowarat Road, the street was blocked off for massive dragon and lion dances. Dancers in heavy costumes jumped on high poles while drums beat loudly. Whether it was the January countdown or the Lunar New Year, Thailand has proven once again that it knows how to start a year with style and smiles.



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Bells, Tentacles, Gonads: The Anatomy and Taxonomy of Jellyfish

By Pooh Year 9

In the oceans of our world, there exist many marvelous creatures. One of the most exciting creatures in my opinion is the jellyfish with their transparent bodies. In this article, together we'll learn about some of the different parts of jellyfish and their classifications within the animal kingdom.

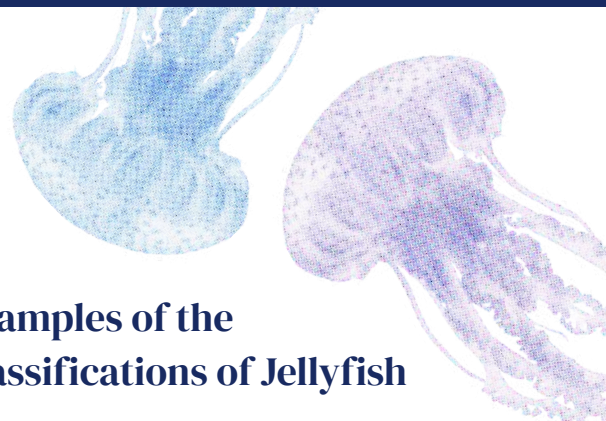
The bell of a jellyfish, the main body, is usually shaped like a dome, an umbrella or a cube depending on the species and group of jellyfish. The purpose of the bell is mostly for movement due to jellyfish swimming by jet propulsion. It first starts with the circular muscles contracting then the bell pushes water out, moving the jellyfish forwards. There are 4 different bell shapes: scyphozoa, cubozoa, hydrozoa and staurozoa.

The bell has three main layers, starting with the epidermis which is the outer layer. It contains nerve and sensory cells, and may also contain pigment cells for colour. The next layer is the mesoglea, which is a thick, jelly-like substance. The mesoglea is mostly made of water (95%) but also contains collagen fibers and some cells. The purpose of the mesoglea is to provide buoyancy and structure to the jellyfish. The innermost layer is the gastrodermis, which lines the gastrovascular cavity (stomach) and is involved in digestion.

Next are the tentacles; jellyfish use their long, flexible tentacles to capture prey and defend against predators. There are multiple different tentacle differences, with some jellyfish having fewer tentacles but are more venomous, while others have thin and delicate tentacles, many marginal tentacles or tiny tentacles with extremely potent venom. However, my favourite group of jellyfish is the moon jelly group that has short, frilly oral arms.

The structure of these tentacles are quite complicated but each tentacle contains an epidermis, mesoglea, gastrodermis, nerve net, muscle fibers and nematocysts, which are the stinging cells. Nematocysts contain a coiled harpoon-like thread, venom and trigger hair (cnidocil). When they're triggered, the thread shoots out and penetrates the prey. After that, the toxin gets injected into the prey. This is one of the fastest biological mechanisms in the animal kingdom.

Afterwards are the gonads, which are the reproductive organs of jellyfish that produce gametes (eggs or sperm). The gonads are usually found in the gastrodermis and are attached to gastric pouches. They're visible through the bell in transparent species of jellyfish. For example, the Aurelia Aurita has four horseshoe-shaped gonads visible through the bell. Although all jellyfish belong to the Phylum Cnidaria, reproduction can vary slightly between different species and classes. Most jellyfish have two reproduction stages, which are the Medusa Stage (free-swimming, sexual reproduction) and the Polyp Stage (attached, asexual reproduction). The alternation between the two stages is called metagenesis (alternation of generations).



Examples of the Classifications of Jellyfish

Moon Jelly



Credit: Georgia Aquarium

Phylum: Cnidaria Family: Ularidae
Class: Scyphozoa Genus: Aurelia
Order: Semaestomeae Species: Aurelia Aurita

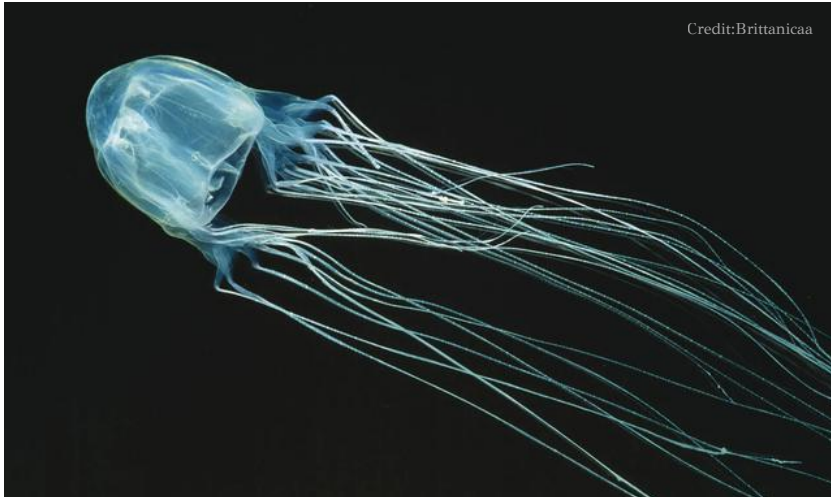
Lion's Mane Jelly



Credit: Wikipedia

Phylum: Cnidaria Family: Cyaneidae
Class: Scyphozoa Genus: Cyanea
Order: Semaestomeae Species: Cyanea Capillata

Box Jelly



Phylum: Cnidaria
Class: Cubozoa
Order: Chirodropida
Family: Chirodropidae
Genus: Chironex
Species: Chironex Fleckeri



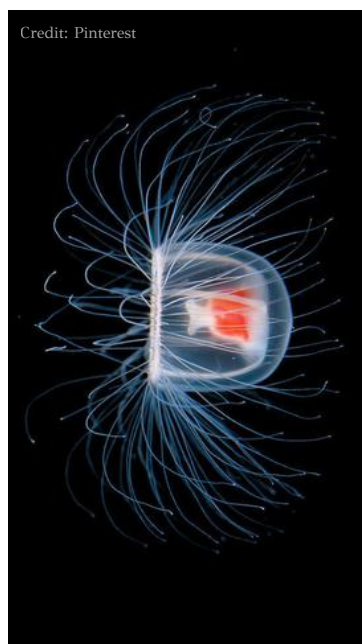
Within the phylum Cnidaria, jellyfish are divided into several classes. There are 4 main classes: Scyphozoa (True Jellyfish), Cubozoa (Box Jellyfish), Hydrozoa and Staurozoa. Scyphozoa jellyfish are characterized by their large dome-shaped bells, thick mesoglea, no velum and how they're mostly marine and strong swimmers. Cubozoa jellyfish are cube-shaped, have complex camera-like eyes, are strong swimmers and are the most venomous of them all. Hydrozoa jellyfish are small and delicate, and have velum — this class also contains some not “true” jellyfish like the Physalia Physalis, which look like jellyfish but aren't. Finally is the class Staurozoa, which are stalked and attached to rocks. There are currently over 2,000 known jellyfish species, although new species are discovered regularly so the number is always increasing.

To wrap it all up, jellyfish are a very unique species with multiple different species and classes, each with distinct features and characteristics. All of these reasons combined are why jellyfish are truly magnificent and one of the coolest sea creatures out there in the world.

Immortal Jelly



Phylum: Cnidaria
Class: Hydrozoa
Order: Anthoathecata
Family: Oceanitidae
Genus: Turritopsis
Species: Turritopsis Dohmii



The Inland Taipan Snake

By Jacob Year 7

In the dry landscapes of Queensland, Australia live the world's most venomous snake: the Inland Taipan.

What it looks like:

When you're exploring Australia's Queensland desert and see a creature with a strikingly black head and a sandy brown scaly body, you might think it's just a harmless snake, right? Wrong! You are currently facing the world's most venomous snake.

Scientific name: *Oxyuranus microlepidotus*

Neurotoxin levels compared to a king cobra:

You may think that the cobra is stronger. Wrong! The inland taipan venom is approximately 72 times more deadly than the king cobra. To illustrate, a king cobra bite releasing approximately 420 mg of venom is fatal to 2600 mice, while the inland taipan's bite, only releasing 44 mg of venom, has the potential to kill as many as 220,000 mice. These snakes are also known to release up to 110 mg in a single bite - that's enough to wipe out over half a million mice, or almost 100 human beings.

Behaviour:

Fortunately, it normally stays away from humans due to its shy nature and doesn't attack us. But if you are making it feel threatened, it will strike back.



Attack method:

It gives a warning by using a tight S-shaped position, but if the offender chooses to ignore the warning the Inland taipan will strike from 2-3 bites releasing venom into the blood vessels and the nervous system.

Effects of the bite

After being bitten, the victim will experience a headache, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. If the inland taipan antivenom is not given within 45 minutes of the bite, the victim can experience paralysis and respiratory failure, which can be fatal.

How did it become so venomous?

Over 65 million years ago, when the titanaboa was still alive, it hunted prey without using venom. Due to climate change, its prey had many places to escape. Since then, many snakes have adapted to hunt prey using venom. Those snakes had one of two types of venom, beta neurotoxins and alpha neurotoxins, but the inland taipan has both alpha and beta neurotoxins, which makes it very venomous.

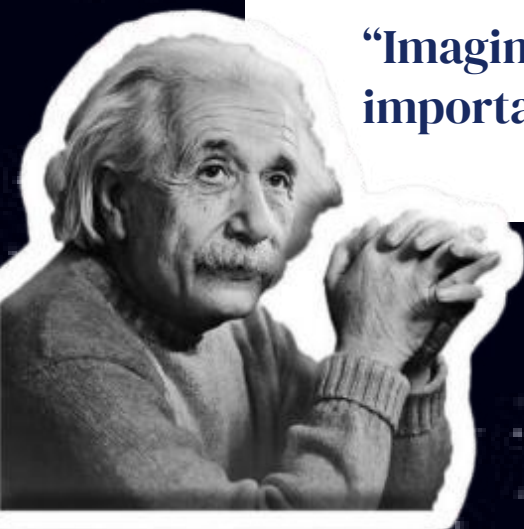
Did you Know?

The Inland Taipan's colour changes with the seasons becoming lighter in the summer and darker in the winter.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, if you're walking in the dry deserts of Queensland, Australia, be warned that the inland taipan is there but hiding under the rocks of the sandy desert landscape. We should respect their shy nature and leave them alone — for the sake of our own safety.





**“Imagination is more
important than knowledge”
- Albert Einstein**



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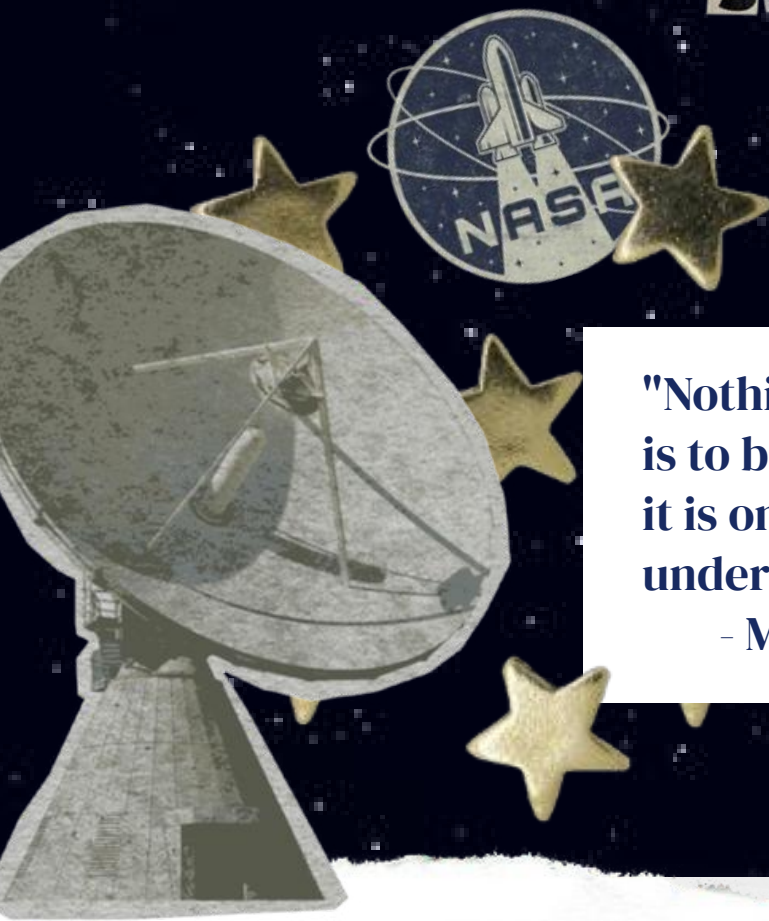
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to
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to the moon



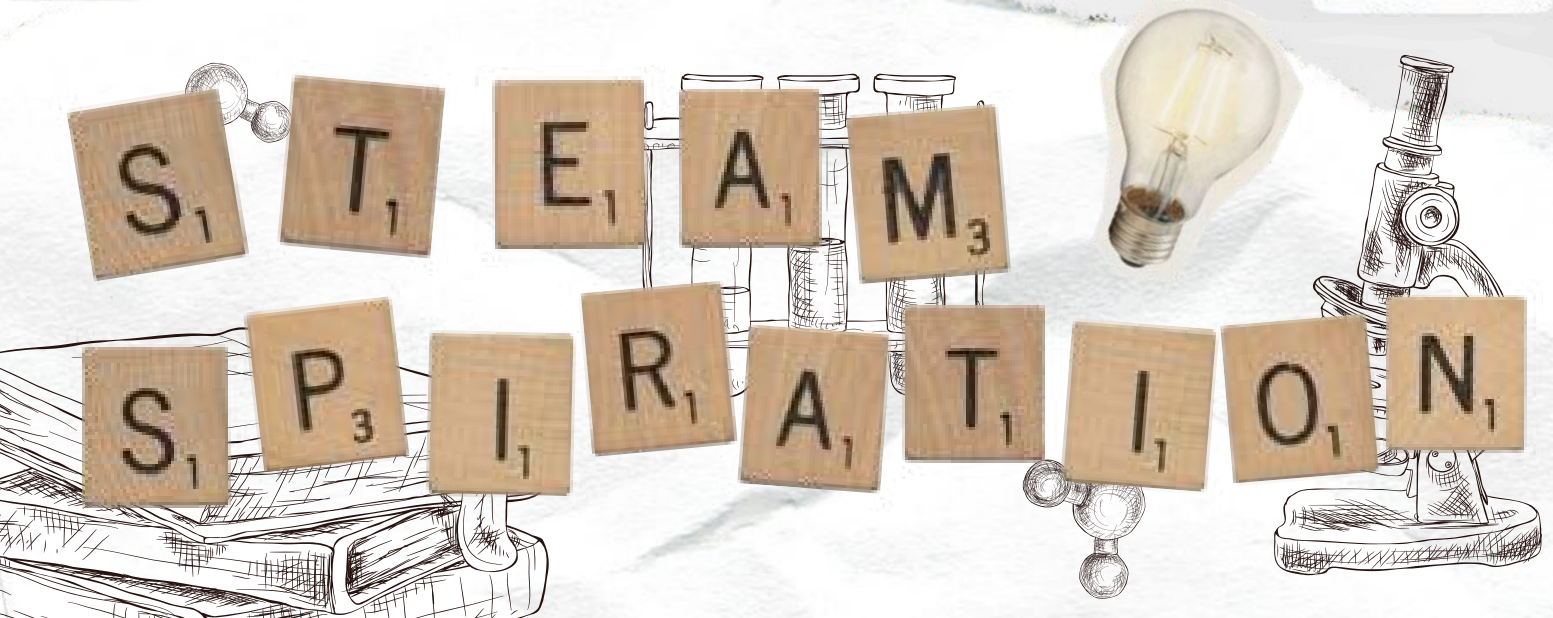
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**“Nothing in life
is to be feared;
it is only to be
understood.”
- Marie Curie**



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How Is Our Food Kept Safe?

By June Year 13

Have you ever checked where your food comes from?

You may be living in Bangkok, but the apples in your kitchen might be from another city, or even another country. Chocolate could come from West Africa, seafood from Asia and cheese from Europe. Every day, billions of meals are prepared with ingredients sourced from all around the world. So how do we know that the food we eat is safe? The answer lies in global food standards, which are rules and guidelines designed to protect consumers and ensure food quality across borders.

Global food standards are internationally recognised rules that regulate how food is grown, processed, packaged, transported and sold. One of the most important organisations behind these standards is the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which was established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Together, they develop science-based guidelines that countries use to shape their own food safety laws.

These standards matter more than we might think. Food can sometimes carry harmful bacteria, viruses or chemicals that cause illnesses. Without clear safety rules, outbreaks of foodborne diseases would be more common. The importance of food safety became especially clear in 2008, when China faced a major food safety crisis involving the dairy company Sanlu Group. Milk powder produced by the company was deliberately contaminated with melamine, which is an industrial chemical used to produce plastic, fertilisers and concrete. It was added to falsely increase protein readings during quality tests. As a result, more than 300,000 infants fell ill, and 6 deaths were reported. The scandal caused widespread public outrage and severely damaged trust in domestic food products. Beyond these immediate human costs, the incident exposed serious weaknesses in regulatory control and enforcement. It showed how gaps in monitoring and corporate misconduct can have devastating consequences. In a globalised food market, this crisis also disrupted international trade, as other countries imposed restrictions on Chinese dairy imports.

Today, food safety faces new and evolving challenges. Climate change is altering agricultural conditions, which increases the risk of contamination and the spread of foodborne pathogens. Higher temperatures can increase the risk of spoilage during transportation and storage, particularly across long supply chains. At the same time, global trade has grown more complex, making it difficult to trace products back to the source of contamination.

However, technology is strengthening the system. Digital tracking, improved laboratory and supply chain transparency initiatives are allowing regulators to respond more quickly to potential risks.

Although food safety regulation may not be the most fun topic, it is essential to the trust we place in what we eat. So, the next time you unwrap a chocolate bar or bite into a piece of fruit, consider the invisible network of rules that made it possible.



A Beginner's Guide to Composting

By Torfun Year 10

In today's world, we often forget about gardening. But did you know that gardening is incredibly important, being the foundation of our food? Gardens provide a direct food source to us while greatly benefiting the environment by increasing biodiversity. One of the most intriguing aspects of gardening is compost, a nutrient-dense mixture of organic matter (decomposed plants and animals). Composting is an easy, relaxing hobby, so why not do it in your free time?

The Steps to Composting

1. First, find a bin and place a thin stack of newspaper at the bottom. Avoid glossy newspapers, as they contain toxic materials. Layer it with any dry material, preferably dried leaves, dried grass or shredded newspaper.
2. Scoop a thick layer of soil on top of the dry material (preferably filling 80% of the bin) in order to add vital microorganisms like bacteria and fungi to act as a "starter" for the composting process. Additionally, it absorbs excess moisture and improves aeration, helping prevent smelly compost.
3. Add green material such as food scraps or dead plants. These can simply come from your kitchen, where major food waste is created. Instead of just wasting food, you can add it to your compost bin every week, and the waste will become an important resource for your plants.



4. Every time you add green material, you must add at least an equal amount of dry material. This helps balance the amount of microorganisms and ensures your compost won't smell.
5. Stir the bin once a week in order to aerate it. Compost microbes are aerobic, meaning they need air to work efficiently. Without aeration, anaerobic bacteria would start working, making your compost smelly (from the gases and acids produced) and slow to break down.



Composting is important because it prevents these seemingly useless food scraps from contributing to landfill waste. Landfills are full of harmful waste, which pollutes the air. Composting also enriches soil for better plant growth and supports increasing biodiversity for a healthier planet, which is especially crucial in an age where extinction is becoming a threat and climate change is prevalent.



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Adventures in Ecotopia: Part Two

By Proud Year 13

The Dragon advanced. I backed up against the Machine. There was a blinding flash of lightning and a booming thunderclap as we were enveloped in thick sheets of rain. The Dragon suddenly emerged through the haze just inches from my face, nostrils flared, and growling quietly. I pressed myself flatter against the metal, hardly daring to breathe, but soon became aware of a searing pain in my back — the Machine was almost unbearably hot up close. Then it hit me.

“I... I think I know why you’re angry. Please — I want to help,”

The Dragon looked straight into my eyes; I held its gaze. The creature’s eyes softened. It took a few paces back, allowing me to cross to a big red lever protruding from the Machine labelled “POWER SWITCH”. I could feel the Dragon’s eyes following me, watching intently. I yanked down on the lever with all my strength. It didn’t budge. I pulled again, panic rising in my chest as I tugged again and again, but to no avail.

Just as I was about to give up, Sangkom appeared beside me.

“What are you doing? Pulling the lever will shut down the Machine!” she shouted. Her voice was barely audible through the pounding of the rain in my ears.

“Exactly! We need to shut it down!”

“What?”

“We need to shut it down!” I yelled, louder.

“Why would you do that?” Sangkom cried.

Behind us, the Dragon gave a low growl.

“Because the Machine is making the Dragon angry! That’s why it keeps raining!”

“What are you talking about?”

“Can’t you feel how warm it is near the Machine?” I bellowed, voice going hoarse.

“Yeah, but what does that have to do with anything?” Sangkom shrieked.

A massive thunderclap made us both jump. Then, it rained even harder.

“The Machine is heating the air! It’s-”

“What are you saying?”

“The air! The Dragon-”

“I can’t hear you!” Sangkom cried desperately.

The Dragon gave another growl, louder this time. We were running out of time.

I sat bolt upright in bed, heart pounding and hair plastered to my drenched face. The stuck lever was all I could think about at school. I frantically researched as many solutions to climate change as I could find, hoping that one of them would help me figure out how to shut down the Machine. By the time I went to bed, I had made lots of progress on my project, but still had no idea how to stop the Machine.

There was no time to keep explaining. Instead, I grabbed the lever and started pulling on it again. It still wouldn’t move. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Sangkom hesitating. I kept trying anyway. There was the tiniest click as I felt the lever shift almost imperceptibly under my weight. I kept going, but I was getting tired. I couldn’t keep this up for much longer.

Then, Sangkom rushed up next to me and took hold of the lever. She looked at me and nodded once. Without another word, we both pulled. The lever groaned. My heart leapt as it slowly began to move. Then, with one last heave, it finally gave way and snapped down with a heavy, resounding “CLUNK”. At once, the Machine’s whirring slowed and subsided, giving way to the deafening static of the rain. The Dragon reared back and roared. We dropped to the ground, hugging each other tightly. I squeezed my eyes shut and braced myself. There was a massive tremble, and then... silence.

That morning, the sky was clear and blue. But by noon, it was cloudy again. It drizzled on and off the entire afternoon, and I began to worry that my idea to shut down the Machine was a mistake. I focused on my project; all I had left to do was the conclusion, but I was struggling to decide which of the solutions to climate change I researched was the best one. The sky was clear when I went to bed.

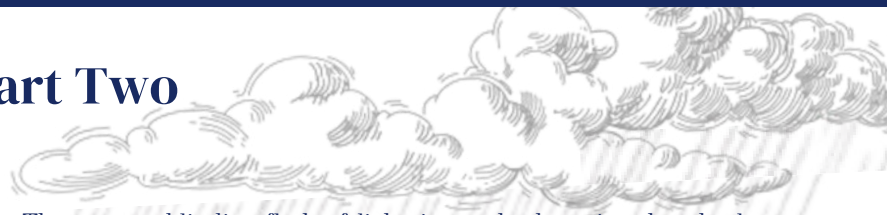
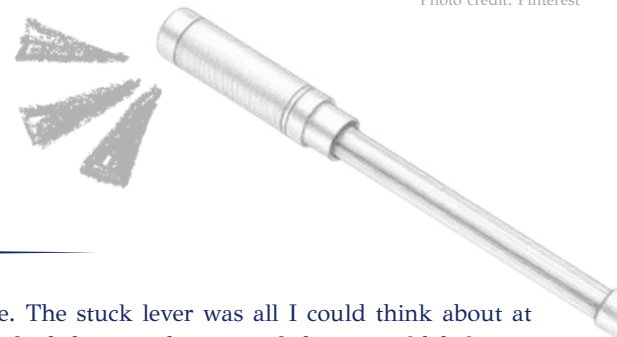


Photo credit: Pinterest





I opened my eyes. Sangkom had disappeared. I was alone with the Dragon again. It regarded me steadfastly, its earlier aggression replaced by a calm air. Its scales, previously the same dark grey shade as the clouds, had become a pale, shimmering silver. The rain had stopped completely and the last rays of the evening sun peeked through the thinning storm clouds. The Dragon lingered for another moment before it turned and spread its massive wings. I felt something fall into my palm as it took off, disappearing within minutes over the horizon, its roar just faintly audible across the still evening air.

“Is that what I think it is?”

I turned and saw some villagers approaching. It was only then that I looked down and realised that I was clutching something small and silvery.

“Oh my, what an honour!” an elderly woman gasped, “The Storm Dragon only gifts its scales to those who have done a noble deed!”

“How did you know the Machine was causing the problem?” Sangkom asked, suddenly beside me again.

I jumped, nearly dropping the dragon scale.

“What? How did you-? Where did you disappear to?” I asked, blinking in confusion.

Sangkom looked at me blankly.

“What do you mean? I’ve been here this whole time,”

I decided not to dwell on it.

“Well, you said that the Dragon usually lives in the mountains in the Far North of Ecotopia, right? I’m guessing it’s pretty cold up there. But the steam from the Machine was warming the air, and I think it was agitating the Dragon. That’s why it attacked your village — it was trying to stop the Machine,” I explained.

“Are you saying that... we can’t use the Machine anymore?” Sangkom asked. A murmur of shock spread through the gathered villagers.

“But the Machine has been powering our village for decades! You can’t expect us to just accept that we can’t use it anymore!” someone objected.

Then the crowd erupted in a chorus of protests.

“How will we see at night without lights?”

“How will we get our water without pumps?”

The elderly woman from before thumped her staff against the ground. The crowd fell silent.

“Storm Dragon or not, we will eventually run out of geo-crystals to fuel the Machine. We need to find a new power source. While we’re still looking, the Machine can be switched on for fixed periods of time and then switched off to stop the air from getting too warm.”

“But what will we use instead of geo-crystals?” one villager asked.

“We can use the wind!”

“No — we should harness the sun’s rays!”

“Water is more reliable!”

“The Storm Dragon gave her its scale — we should ask her!”

I became acutely aware of everyone’s eyes on me. I swallowed. I was unpleasantly reminded of my climate change project back at home.

“Uhh...”

I thought about all the different solutions to climate change I had researched, still unable to decide which was the best one to share.

“Those all sound like great solutions... and maybe that’s the point. Maybe there isn’t only one solution to the problem. Why don’t you combine all of your ideas?”

“Agreed,” the elderly woman approached me and smiled, “Thank you, brave one, for saving our village. Now, I believe it is time for you to return home.”

And with that, the world began to spin. The faces of the villagers became a blur of colour, blending with the Machine and the sky. I gave Sangkom one last hug before I was whisked away.



I sat up and rubbed my eyes. The first rays of sunshine peeked through my curtains — it wasn’t raining! Then I noticed something small and silvery on my lap.

I walked into school with the dragon scale around my neck, tucked out of sight safely under my shirt. I was finally able to finish my project, and ended up getting a full score!

“How did you come up with the idea to combine multiple solutions?” my teacher asked.

I smiled, reaching up to clutch my dragon scale necklace.

“Let’s just say it... came to me in a dream.”

Meet the Characters!



Photo credit: Shutterstock

The Storm Dragon

- An ancient and powerful creature that controls the weather — just like the Earth's climate
- The Dragon's unusually aggressive behaviour represents climate change; a direct result of the people's actions
- The Storm Dragon calmed down when the Machine was shut down, showing how the climate can eventually return to normal if we solve the problem at its root cause

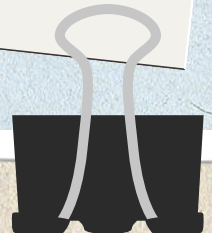
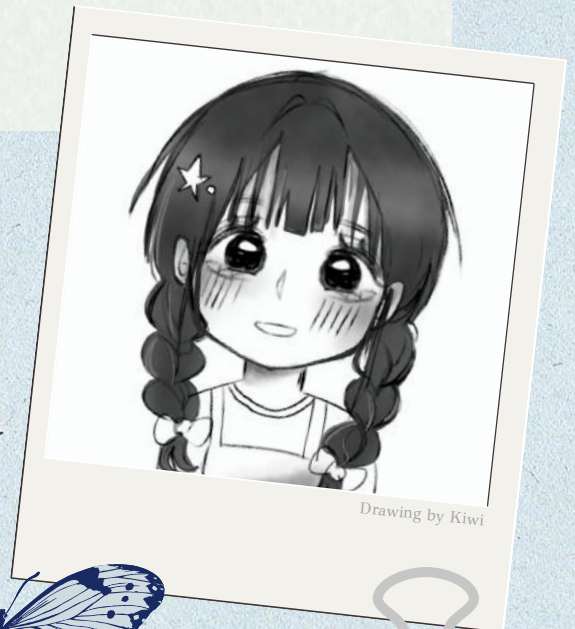


Sangkom

- Her name comes from the Thai word for "society" (สังคม)
- Can be a bit unpredictable — has a habit of randomly appearing and disappearing
- A lot stronger than she looks! She can do anything she puts her mind to

Why is Sangkom so strong?

Because she represents society's potential to create change. We can achieve amazing things when we work together as a society, like stopping climate change.



Ecotopia isn't an entirely fictional world! It's based on real life:

- The villagers' main source of energy, geo-crystals, are just like our fossil fuels: coal, oil, and gas
- The Machine heating the air represents global warming in the real world
- Sangkom became uncomfortable when I asked her what happens when geo-crystals run out, mirroring how people tend to avoid thinking about the limited fossil fuels we have left
- The strange weather patterns I described in the story were based on real experiences of rain I've had over the last few years — climate change is a real, current issue, not a fictional one

Some things to think about:

- Often it can feel like our actions don't make an impact at all — notice how long I had to keep pulling the lever before it started to move? Perseverance is the key: small but consistent effort beats individual big actions.
- Climate change is far too big of an issue for one person to tackle alone — that's why I needed Sangkom to help me out! Ending climate change requires everyone working together. That creates a much bigger impact.
- Sometimes, warnings about climate change can get "drowned out" by all the other things happening in our lives, like how I was struggling to communicate with Sangkom over the noise of the rain.
- Actions speak louder than words. Sometimes words aren't enough to convince people to take action — the best thing to do is to simply take action. Lead by example, and people will follow.
- Solving climate change might not be as simple as pulling down on a lever, but it starts with the determination to make a difference as a society.

The Curious Case of Rosemary Manor

By Torfun Year 10

"No. 21, this is your final warning. Fail again, and you shall be fired. The agency does not tolerate your mistakes." A harsh female voice rang across the corridor where I was waiting outside the director's office. Every 2 weeks, people in the agency would be sent to the director for mysterious reasons. Some were fired. Some were given new tasks, each one more perilous than the last. I shuddered, wondering what would happen to me once it was my turn to meet her.

"I swear, it wasn't my fault! I woke up, and the subject was already dead! There was nothing I could do," a young man exclaimed in panic.

Task 5. Now that was what they were talking about. In the past few weeks, my coworkers often talked about it and pitied No. 21. The poor man was forced to undergo a task, having to act as a bodyguard for one of the agency's biggest and most powerful sponsors. From the heated conversation, he had obviously failed.

"You may leave the office. Just remember, we are always watching," said the woman, and there was a loud thump from the slowly opening door. The man flung himself into the corridor and sprint-walked down the hallway to his office. Just as I turned around, the woman beckoned me to her desk. "Ah, there you are. We have a little task for you, No.15," she said quietly when I sat down in her dark office, the secretary's room. "Pick up where No. 21 left off. Hopefully, you will be more competent than that hopeless man."

I felt dizzy with fear. From what I heard, a man died. What if his killer found me? What if I failed? And what would the agency do to me? My sick thoughts swam around my mind like hungry sharks in the deep ocean. I stared at the woman's unnaturally expressionless face while the cold sweat crept up my face from the looming dread. "Your time starts," she proclaimed, "Now!" as she stamped my document with a loud thunk. The grandfather clock beside me struck. It was midnight.



King Arthur and His Knight

By Tee Year 10

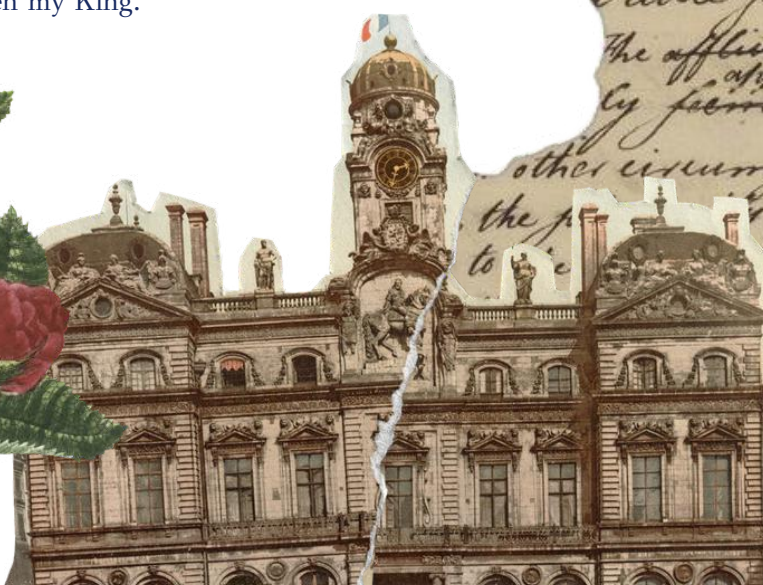
A little insight:

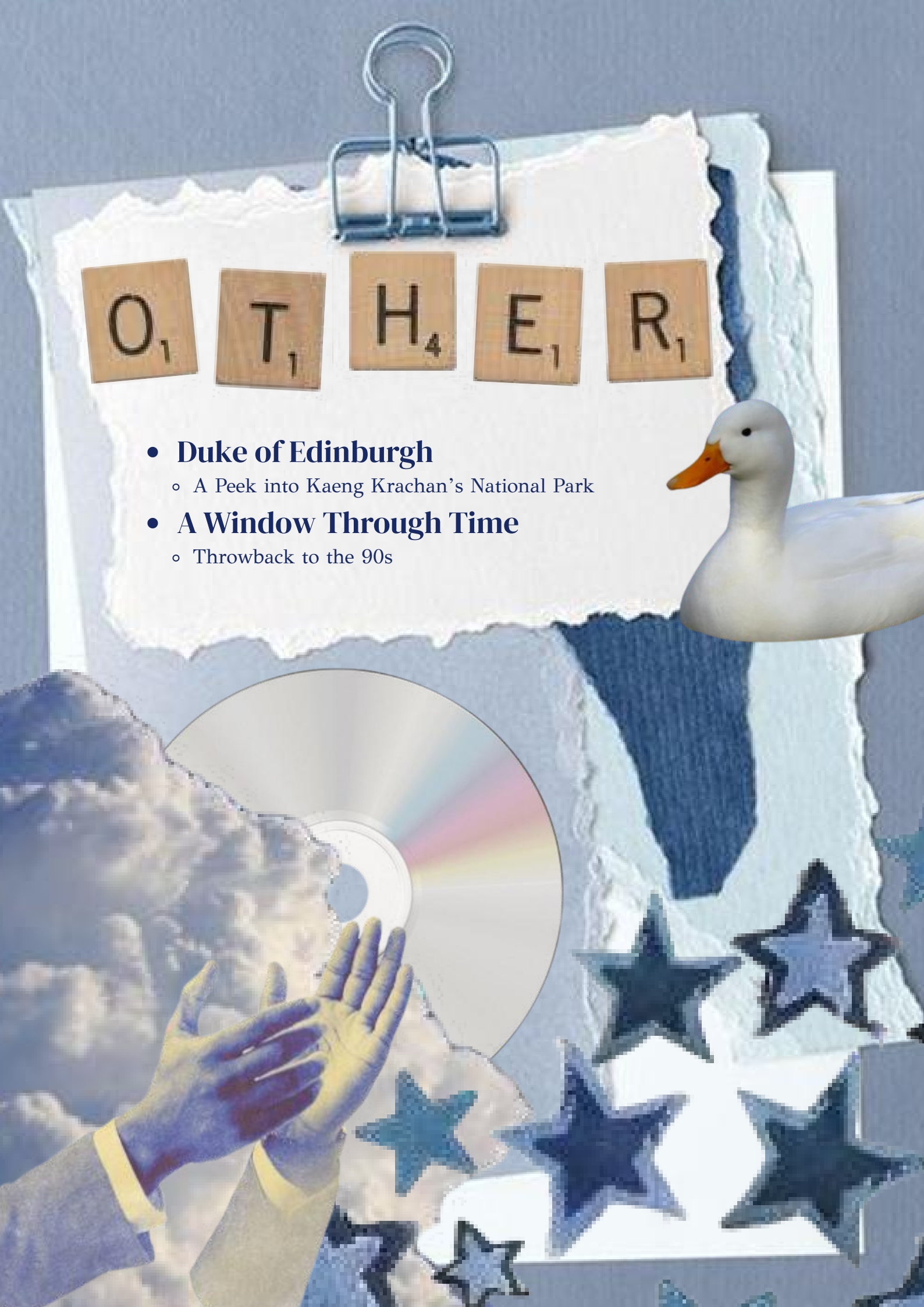
The characters – King Arthur and Lancelot are from ‘The Story of King Arthur and His Knights’, which is set in medieval times. In the story, Lancelot is King Arthur’s loyal knight, but he is remembered as unfaithful and a betrayer because Lancelot had an affair with Guinevere (King Arthur’s wife). This made him be perceived as a traitor and disloyal to his duties/the king.

Lancelot du Lac.
A knight,
A traitor,
A deceiver.
My name—
Written with such falsehood,
Such dismay,
With no regard for the truth.

Lancelot du Lac.
Once a knight,
Now a history,
No longer a lover.
My words were caught,
My throat was parched,
Yet the look on my King’s face,
Left me with bitter pain.

Lancelot du Lac.
Always a knight,
Always a figure,
But never a traitor.
And til this day,
The truth had been barred,
My love was never her,
It had always been my King.





O, T, H, E, R,

- **Duke of Edinburgh**
 - A Peek into Kaeng Krachan's National Park
- **A Window Through Time**
 - Throwback to the 90s



A Peek into Kaeng Krachan's National Park

By Pun & Tee Year 10

"Oh, what a thrill it is to take in the sights of the great outdoors", right? Wrong—well, not if you are unprepared. The Duke of Edinburgh Awards (DofE) could very well be an opportunity to experience nature up close and venture into the chaos of the forest with your friends. But it may also turn out to be a mosquito-swarmed, rain-drenching journey if mishandled. So instead of diving headfirst into this adventure, either triumphantly or stupidly, I would recommend taking a moment to read this article and understand what the award really involves.

Tucked away in the hills of Phetchaburi and Prachuap Khiri Khan, the Kraeng Krachan National Park is a sanctuary for the thriving biodiversity of Thailand. Essentially, it is a tropical rainforest, heavy with humidity and dew. Maybe that doesn't sound very pleasant, but those characteristics are what allow for lush canopies of trees to stretch across the forest floor. The air is often thick with the scent of mud and ripe figs hanging from twisted tree branches. Almost always, a group of hungry mammals would surround the fruits, observing hikers with an edge. That might paint you a pretty picture of what lies within the forest during the day, but at night, everything changes. Predators would come out to hunt; oftentimes, you would hear the distant growl of two animals fighting. Not to mention, the clear glimmer of stars far away from the big city.



Before you decide to step into the alluring labyrinth of trees, plants, flowers and animal life, you must come in handy for both the hike and the camping process or else you might meet your demise! Quite literally. For us year 10s, the school provided us with tents and stoves. However, if you were to go alone, you'd have to bring your own. Aside from the tent itself, it'd be best to bring a sleeping bag, sleeping mat and an inflatable pillow. Without these items, you'd be sleeping uncomfortably on the forest floor—not ideal for comfort. On our hike, each team brought their own food, like packaged meals or wrapped lunches and ingredients to cook dinner, all of which must be carried.

To easily carry these items with you, you'd need a rucksack, a large backpack which allows you to hike with all of your necessities and essentials without it being too heavy. Necessities include hiking-appropriate clothes, skincare/bodycare, and a water bottle (at least 1–2 L). It's often recommended that you bring small snacks or energy bars to help you when you're low on energy whilst hiking. Shoes are also an important factor to consider; you must purchase hiking boots to ensure protection, support, and greater durability, but you may bring a change of shoes for campsite comfort. Other optional but somewhat important items include hats, sunscreen, wet/dry tissue, medicine, and headlamps or torches, as they may come in handy in certain situations and environments.

As mentioned before, the park is brimming with both flora and fauna. Keep in mind that the list of living organisms could go on and on for pages, so we are only going to take a look at a snapshot of the full image. The stump-tailed macaques are there to give us a warm welcome from the park's entrance. Drive slowly with your window open, and you could catch them resting on the side of the road. Wandering near the ponds are the elephants, deer, gaurs, and jackals. If you happen to have really good luck and spot one of these animals, stay quiet and maintain a large distance to avoid danger. Or maybe you prefer plants? If so, keep your eyes peeled for the Sapria ram, a parasitic plant with pink-red blooms, along the Ban Krang-Panoen Thung trail. The Magnolia Mediocrist, tinted a soft pink, is an endemic plant species restricted to only the region of the National Park.

At Kaeng Krachan National Park, we hiked through 5 trails in total. On the first day, we hiked along two unofficial trails called Trogon and Gaur, where trogons and gaurs are actively present. The journey was followed by a hike towards the dam and back down the Chang Yiap trail. Navigation wasn't considered difficult, unless you went off trail; if so, returning to the original route would be thought of as far from easy. Moving onto day 2, trails were steep, and hikers had to keep their eyes out for any sighting of elephants or gaurs. We hiked through the Vanilla and Pranburi trail; some groups started with Pranburi, whilst others started with Vanilla. The Pranburi trail had a lot of possibilities to observe birdlife, such as the great crested flycatchers, and elephants can also be spotted nearby. The Vanilla Trail offered a lot of plant life, such as the brilliant Rafflesia and even fruits like mangoes. The first day we did a tiring 10 kilometres in total, whilst the second day was fortunately a bit less, coming up to 8 kilometres.

As we arrived at the national park, we settled upon the Ban Krang Campsite, where we put up our tents. The campsite is an open grass area that reaches into the forest, where many of the park's wonders are hidden, and that's exactly why it was a great camping spot. Once night envelopes the area, that is when animals start to thrive...having our campsite so near the forest meant we had a larger chance of meeting unexpected animals like bears, leopards, gaurs, gibbons, porcupines (we managed to spot one) and more! The campsite itself offers a shower area and bathroom stalls, although you may find that they are infested with a swarm of insects and that taking a shower might just give you pneumonia. But of course, with the wide expanse of empty area we had, it was easy to move around, cook and even set up a tarp to enjoy the evening atmosphere of nature and life.

At the end of the day, the Duke of Edinburgh Award isn't only about the buzz of an adventure, but the skills that you picked up along the way. Through continuing to walk even though our shoulders felt like they were buckling, we learnt perseverance and the sustainability of our strength. Through forgetting crucial camping equipment and having to suffer the outcome, we learnt the importance of responsibility and preparedness to tackle the given task. Most importantly, these skills aren't limited to this one specific event; they can be applied in all aspects of life.

Throwback to the 90s

By Pun & Tee Year 10

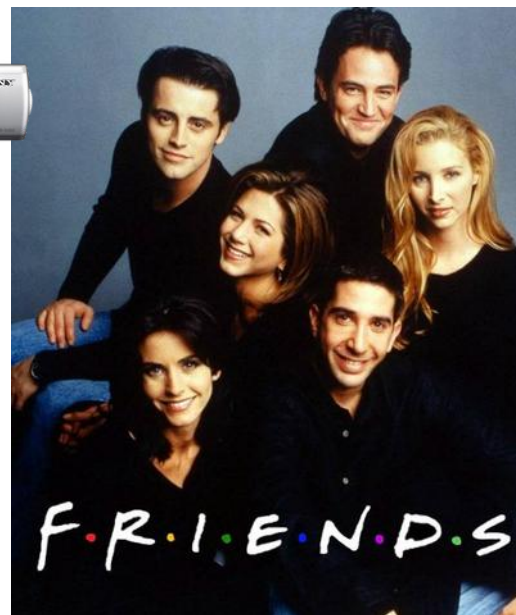


Can you believe that the 1990s was around 36 years ago? Maybe that doesn't sound like a long period of time, but within those years, many things have changed, developed and even modernised. This includes clothing, music, movies/sitcoms, jobs, technology and much more. We'll discuss these points in this article, highlighting how things were in the 90s and how they've persisted through subsequent evolution.

It is no secret that the 90s paved the way for some of the most iconic forms of television. So much so that critics refer to the era as the "Second Golden Age of Television", which may well be an understatement. Society saw the cultural phenomenon of sitcoms and fell in love with its witty banter, physical comedy, or even the excessive laugh tracks. It would be wrong to talk about sitcoms without mentioning "Seinfeld" and "Friends". Seinfeld, often joked about as "The show about nothing", drew in 26.6 million viewers per episode. But how can a show about nothing be so loved? It all came down to the tone. Writers followed 2 simple rules: 'No hugs' and 'No learning'. This meant morality and emotional touches were stripped from the narrative, establishing a cynical view towards socialising. Contrastingly, the beloved sitcom "Friends" cast a spotlight on the heartfelt relationship between 6 friends. Not only did the show relate to viewers worldwide, but it became a spectacle for fashion, to the extent that Ralph Lauren designed a clothing collection as homage to the character "Rachel Green".

Good Will Hunting, Saving Private Ryan, The Truman Show, 10 Things I Hate About You...ring a bell? Some of the most influential films, still relevant today, were produced during the 90s. When raw visuals and kaleidoscopes of emotions fuse into one, you get "Good Will Hunting". We can blatantly state that any film starring Robin Williams must be a masterpiece, but "Goodwill Hunting" goes beyond that. Similarly, The Truman Show takes you through a collection of visceral feelings that play with the psychological belief of reality. Some say it is a tragedy in disguise, whereas "Saving Private Ryan" is considered a tragedy with no disguises involved. Set during the invasion of Normandy in the Second World War, the story follows the sacrifice of eight lives for one. Lastly, "10 Things I Hate About You" is a modern rendition of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew" which centralizes around true connections, teenage love, and rebellion.

Music historically dates back to 38,000 BC with the evidence of bone flutes, reminding us of its significance and how it impacts each and every generation. Back in the 90s, artists often composed songs with genres such as grunge, alternative rock, pop, hip-hop, and R&B. This era was characterised by an 'open-minded' approach; fans consumed diverse styles from grunge angst to lively pop, offering authenticity, emotional vulnerability, and infectious energy. Singers who are associated with these genres include Mariah Carey, Madonna, Céline Dion, Whitney Houston, and Britney Spears. Famous bands from this time include Nirvana, Oasis, Backstreet Boys, NSYNC, Radiohead, and Weezer. Certain songs that arose from this era and made a hit on the charts are 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' by Nirvana, 'Wonderwall' by Oasis, 'Hit Me Baby One More Time' by Britney Spears, and many more. Music here served as a transformative era that redefined things such as culture, fashion and even social norms. This further explains the explosive attention the 1990s music received; it contained versatility, creative power, and raw, undefined emotions—allowing for all listeners to relate and enjoy.



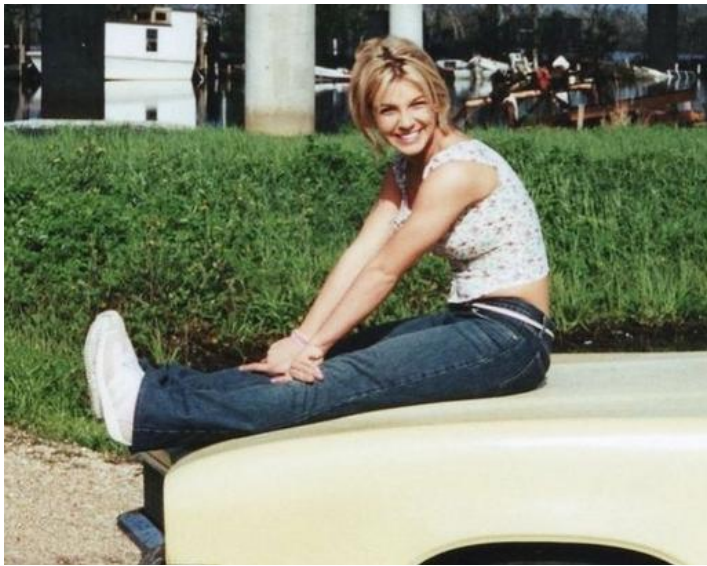
Credit: IMDb



Credit: Whitney Houston



Credit: Pinterest



Credit: Pinterest

In the present, fashion has become more structured and complex—featuring tighter, more curated and sustainable clothing like Y2K fashion. However, in the 90s, fashion was more focused on relaxed looks that were heavily influenced by music subcultures. Styles such as grunge, casual streetwear, preppy styles and slip dresses were largely adored by people. These styles incorporated accessories such as tattoo chokers, scrunchies, mini backpacks and butterfly clips, whilst footwear included platform sandals (mules), Converse shoes, Adidas shoes and jelly shoes. Back then, clothing was usually made of leather, denim, velvet, and sheer fabrics, a contrast to present-day materials such as cotton, nylon, polyester, and wool. While it's clear that the 90s' cleaner, baggy and loose style eventually developed into a more versatile athleisure and Y2K present-day style, certain people still adopt the 90s way of fashion in tune with their own preferences.

Recently, current trends on social media have popularised being offline and the return of analogue. It may be strange to even fathom why we would stop scrolling. As of now, the world may seem unstable with economic messes or digital anxiety. As a coping mechanism, the new generation sought to relive a 'simpler' time, longing for nostalgia. Some people may wish for a nostalgic past in an era which they did not experience. This is known as 'historical nostalgia'. The resurgence of digital cameras has spread rapidly across the globe. Driven by the late 90's Y2K aesthetic, they provide grainy textures, high contrast, and harsh flash, which many have found visually appealing. An alternative, which encourages deliberation, is the use of a film camera. The satisfying shutter and slow process have made the lost art of film a gem in the digital age. Instead of streaming songs on Spotify, society has adopted a retro way of enjoying full albums: the Walkman. The retro-aesthetic of the Walkman and the ability to physically own collections of your music are similar to a tangible anchor of memory.

If you've ever wondered whether jobs have disappeared due to modernisation and the development of society, well, there are quite a few that are no longer common because of the rise of technology. Examples include travel agents, video store clerks, film projectionists, switchboard operators, typewriter repair technicians, pre-press printers, and paperboys/papergirls. These jobs have largely disappeared due to the rise of the internet, digital technology, and automation—often replaced by streaming services, digital photography, automated phone systems, and online booking platforms. Even though these occupations are rarely seen nowadays, in certain rural areas, you may find that people still take on these jobs.

Can you believe that the 1990s was 3 decades ago? Yes, since then, things have certainly changed, but perhaps you are now able to see how some trends in the modern day seamlessly weave into the 90s era, or appreciate its profound legacy in culture.



Credit: Pinterest





MEET THE TEAM

Teachers



Miss Carter
Coordinator



Proud (Year 13)
Editor-in-Chief, Writer



Kiwi (Year 13)
Head of Design



Torfun (Year 10)
Assistant Editor, Writer

Student Leaders

New Members: Welcome to the team!



Jacob (Year 7)

Hi, my name's Jacob. I'm from Thailand and my family owns a place at Phuket. I have a few friends. I scored an A in Maths and the highest score in the year group last term. Although you may not believe me, I can play Golden on the piano. I once went to Bangrachan Memorial Park.

Writers



Alice (Year 13)



Julia (Year 13)



Nampetch (Year 13)



Ferngy (Year 11)



June (Year 13)



Pun (Year 10)



Suji (Year 10)



Tee (Year 10)



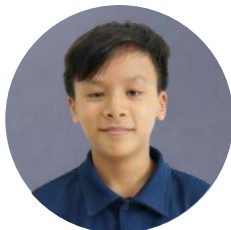
Pooh (Year 9)



Hyun (Year 13)



Serena (Year 8)



TJ (Year 7)



Miki (Year 7)



Jacob (Year 7)



Tan Tan (Year 7)

Designers