

EAL Newsletter 2026

Travelling through Languages and Cultures

Editor's notes:

The EAL club is for students with English as their second language, to teach them about cultures and help them develop their English. Following the last years topic "Legends and Icons - Stories Around the World", this year will focus more on the experiences of our members around the world, to let them express their experiences and love for different places. Editing this newsletter has helped me learn more of different places from their perspective, and potentially it will also teach you much more about the world.

by Alvin

To be honest, it has been a journey from the first newsletter to now. When we first suggested the idea of making a newsletter for the EAL club four years ago, we have never anticipated it to be an annual club activity which everyone looks forward to. Of course, this is all thanks to the wonderful submissions from our club members, and the teachers supporting us. The purpose of the newsletter is for EAL students to learn about things happening around the world and to encourage them to convey their ideas through opportunities like these. So, please enjoy reading this newsletter as an appreciation towards our EAL students!

by Bernadette :)

Musical Theatre in East Asia

by Marcus Ho

Korea

Some believe Korean musical theatre industry is one of the most successful across the globe alongside New York Broadway and London West End. Just like Broadway and West End, Korea also has it's own theatre district, the Daehangno (College Road). However, Daehangno tend to have smaller theatres, around 200 seats, where West End can have up to 2300 seats. This creates a better connection because the audience can actually see the sweat and tears of the actors.

Another notable feature of Korean musical theatre is that it merges the Western belting technique and their own K-Ballad techniques. This brings power, support and control to their vocals, especially in the high notes. It is not rare for K-pop idols to crossover in modern musical theatre. This attracts K-pop fans that may not be interested in musicals at first.

China mainland and Hong Kong

In China Mainland, immersive environment style theatre is becoming increasingly popular among young people. Where people watch the show in non-typical theatre spaces. It capsizes the traditional media of theatre arts, where actors play on stage and audiences watch. Because it is not in a traditional theatre. Audiences can actively participate and explore, or even develop the plot by interacting with the actor. Therefore, requires exceptional improv skills from actors, as the audience's reaction may be unexpected.

Japan

The Takarazuka Revue (寶塚歌舞劇團) contributes a lot to the musical theatre industry in Japan. It is a Japanese all-female musical theatre troupe formed in 1913. All members are graduates from Takarazuka Music School, and all of them are not married. Some actresses will be assigned to be the male role, and their voices and tone will be deeper in performances. 2.5D musicals is another part of Japan's unique stage culture. Also called anime musical, is created by changing anime to musicals. The costume and make-up are aimed to let the actors look as similar to the original character as possible. The first 2.5D musical is called 'The Rose of Versailles', which is a performance from The Takarazuka Revue in 1974, which is originally a manga instead of anime.

Japanese Fashion

by Sammi Chi

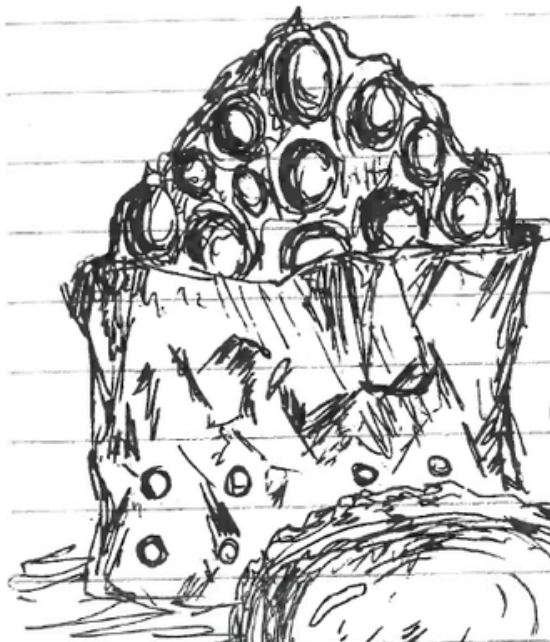


Japanese fashion is known for being creative and different. People often wear clothes, hairstyles, and accessories that show their own personality instead of following trends or what everyone else is wearing. One famous place for this is Harajuku, where people wear many different styles, from bright and colorful outfits to clothes inspired by traditional Japanese culture. Japanese fashion teaches that it is okay to be yourself and dress in a way that expresses yourself. This idea has inspired many people around the world to be more confident and express themselves through fashion.

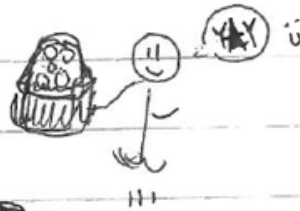
Artwork

by Hannah Lau

Hong Kong snacks



- egg waffle
a common street snack
you can find in hongkong



- egg tart
an outer pastry crust
filled with egg custard.



- pineapple Bun (Bolo bao)
a sweet milk bun with a golden
crust that forms a pattern
that resembles a pineapple when
baked.



- ziu mei and bao zi
a dimsum you can find
usually in chinese restaurant.

Hannah Lau

How cultural Differences affect behaviour

by Mathis Chan

Good morning!!! Thanks for reading my article, and as an EAL students from Hong Kong, I will introduce you the behaviour influenced by cultural differences, as I observe. My name is Mathis and firstly I will describe the main difference between 2 places.

In my opinion, the main difference is individualism vs collectivism . In UK there is a greater emphasis on individual choice and independence. Students are often encouraged to express personal opinions and making independent decisions is generally valued.

However, in Hong Kong, greater emphasis is on the group, family, or community. I believe decisions maybe taken considering how they affect others. Students may be more likely to seek consensus, for example decision making involves family discussions. Students' self-esteem in school is based on the instructions from the teachers, instead of having their own opinions.

This makes British people more confident and independent . While Hong Kong people are more "groupy", more considering of others but sometimes relying on authority.

The other thing I would like to mention is the communication style. In Hong Kong , communication can sometimes be more indirect. People may avoid openly disagreeing to maintain harmony and prevent losing face of the other person or themselves, even if they disagree with their idea. However, I feel in the UK, people may be more comfortable expressing disagreement. In classrooms, students are often encouraged to debate ideas.

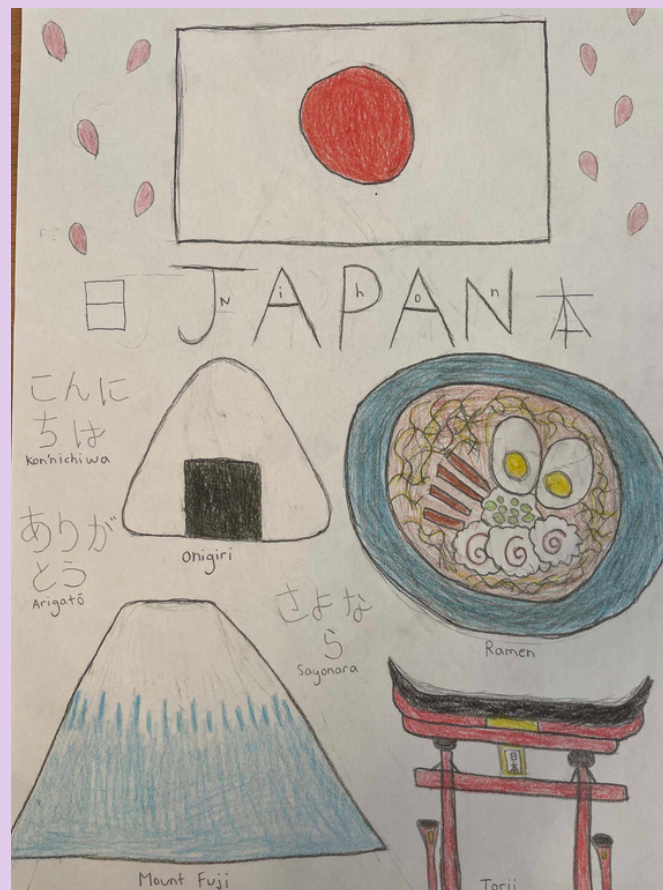
Finally, I want to mention about time management which largely impacts our behaviour and problem solving style . I have observed in the UK , planning is very important before any move and there may be greater emphasis on balancing work and leisure . In Hong Kong , the fast-paced lifestyle and strong focus on efficiency and schedules make lots of people panic and have anxiety.

The major challenge for me is to understand the difference in the pace of time in my art lessons . In Hong Kong , most of the students and me would jump straight to the final drawing when making an art or painting work . But I have experience that in this school , we require a lot of planning , thinking and developing before the creating a master piece in art lessons . This as an obvious example to show how the environment , time and pace influence our working style .

In conclusion,cultural differences do not mean one culture is right and another is wrong. Understanding different behaviours can help students adapt and communicate more effectively in an international school environment.

Artwork

by Giovanna Wan



History of Spain

by Anonymous

How Spain was found: Spain wasn't founded on a single date, but it emerged through centuries of dynastic alliances and the gradual pushing back of Muslim rule (historical and contemporary governance based on Islamic law and religious principles). The crucial turning point was the 1469 marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, which united the two largest Christian kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula.

How the language of Spain was developed: Spanish developed over thousands of years on the Iberian Peninsula. It evolved primarily from Vulgar Latin, the everyday language of Roman soldiers and settlers, which blended with indigenous, Germanic, and Arabic influences before being standardized as a dominant global language.

Celebrations of Spain: Spain hosts hundreds of spectacular celebrations and music festivals year-round. Top highlights include the world-famous San Fermín (running of the bulls) in Pamplona (July 6-14) and La Tomatina (tomato-throwing) in Buñol (August). Other iconic traditions include the Fallas in Valencia (March) and Carnival (February/March) across Tenerife and Cádiz.



Trip to France

by Bosco & Himson

Famous Places

Eiffel Tower

The Eiffel Tower is an iron lattice work tower located on the Champ de Mars on the banks of the Seine in the 7th arrondissement of Paris, France. It is one of Paris's iconic landmarks, a symbol of French culture, and the tallest man-made structure in Paris. Its official address is 5 Rue Anatole-France. Completed in 1889, it was initially named the "300-meter Tower," later named after its designer, Gustave Eiffel.



Louvre Museum

The Louvre Museum in Paris, France, is the world's most visited and largest art museum, with a collection spanning from ancient civilizations to the entire 19th century. Located in the former royal palace on the banks of the Seine, it houses over 610,000 works of art, with approximately 35,000 pieces on permanent public display.

Famous Food



Croissant

Croissants are a type of European bread baked with plenty of butter, resulting in a flaky crust and a milky aroma. Originating in Austria, they were brought to France by Auguste Zang, an Austrian who emigrated there, and flourished in France with their distinctive characteristics. Croissants can be eaten directly after baking, or they can be made with sweet fillings such as fruit or jam, or savory fillings such as cheese or ham. They can also be sliced after baking and used like sandwiches, filled with various spreads, cheese slices, ham slices, and lettuce.

Baguette

French Baguette is a traditional French long bread characterized by its crisp crust and soft interior. It is one of the representative foods of French bread culture and is often eaten as a staple food or with cheese, jam, etc.



Crêpe

Crepes are a traditional Brittany-style pancake, available in both sweet and savory varieties, and can be enjoyed as a dessert or sandwich. Authentic crepe dough requires a special baking pan and spatula, but can also be made at home using a regular frying pan. The fillings are primarily of two flavors: sweet and savory.

Activities

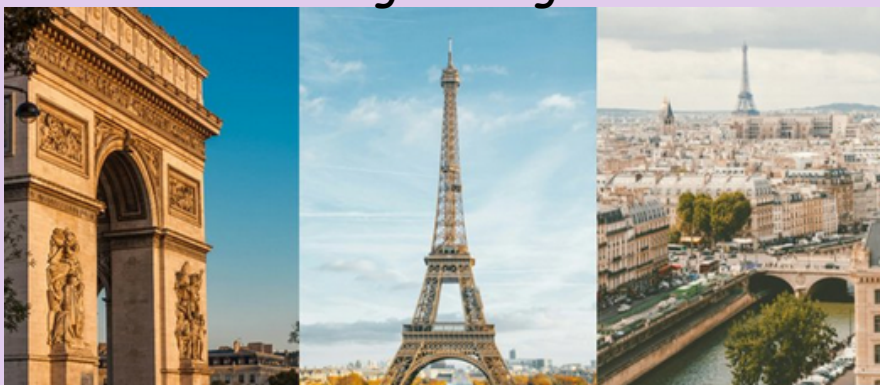
Theme Park



Eating



Sightseeing



Mount Fuji

by Natasha Chan

Mount Fuji is the highest mountain in Japan and is 3,776 metres tall. It is also one of the most famous places in the country because of its beautiful shape and amazing views.

Travelling to Mount Fuji would help me learn more about Japanese culture and language. I could learn some Japanese words and see how people live in Japan. For example, I could learn simple greetings like "konnichiwa" which means hello. I think learning a language is a good way to understand a different culture.

Mount Fuji is actually an active volcano, but it has not erupted for over 300 years. Many people climb it every year, especially during the summer. The mountain is also important in Japanese history and religion, and many artists have painted pictures of it.

I would enjoy visiting the lakes and small towns around Mount Fuji and trying Japanese food.

Overall, Mount Fuji is a great example of how travelling can help people learn about languages and cultures from around the world.

Artwork

by Alvin Young



Tea

by Caleb Yu

Tea leaves originated as *Camellia Sinensis* which is native to China and Northern Myanmar, and the earliest records of tea consumed can be found from 10th century BC and was concentrated as a Southern Chinese practice with However, it is only until the Tang Dynasty (8th century AD) that it became widespread in China. In the 6th century, Buddhist monks introduced tea into Japan and became a staple for cultured people - gentry and the Buddhist priesthood alike. For Korea historical records documented tea ceremonies since the 7th century and have used tea for ritualistic purposes for multiple centuries. The access for tea became increasingly common for people and are all pronounced as "Cha" (茶, 차), and many different forms of preparing tea led to different versions of tea such as Oolong tea where tea leaves were partially fermented before pan frying to preserve flavour or Sencha as an unfermented form of green tea.

Tea has spread through central Asia through the silk road where trade occurred alongside the countries and have spread tea trade throughout Asia and the etymology of Cha has carried onto India as "चाय", Chai, Persia as "چای", cha and Russia as "чай", Chay.

The spreading of tea in Europe started with Portugal establishing a port in Macau, in Canton, where the word of a Chinese drink "cha" spread quickly and borrowed the word from Cantonese to represent Tea. In the early 17th century, the Dutch East India Company brought the first samples of green tea leaves to Amsterdam as "tea", borrowed from Min Chinese (Malay traders also adapted this pronunciation of tea from Min Chinese). This pronunciation influenced the pronunciation of English, French, Spanish and German as tea, té, thé, and tee. The early imports of tea from Amsterdam were via smuggling or through sailors arriving through Eastern boats. The marriage of King Charles II in late 17th anniversary have officially brought tea drinking habit to English court and started the English monopoly of tea leaves in China. The UK also started plantation of tea leaves in India and Sri Lanka as colonialism which gave birth to Assam and Ceylon tea leaves, which also popularised Masala Chai in India as a renowned delicacy. Modern tea culture also gives spinoffs to classical teas such as bubble teas and infusion teas enjoyed uniquely.

Currently we are able to enjoy many exotic versions of tea as a daily treat as a product of globalisation, but it is also good to be grateful that we are able to partake in this convenience due to many who had been taken advantage of for profit due to monopolies.



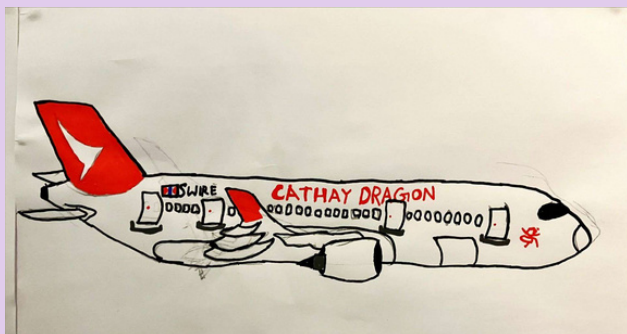
What is the best airline?

by Issac Li



The best airline is Cathay Pacific because the seats are comfy and the service is extraordinary. Also, it is a leading premium airline committed to delivering world-class service and seamless travel experiences. It has an Award-Winning Economy Class because it has frequently won the Skytrax World Airline Awards which is brilliant. Also the Economy dining has genuinely delicious Hong Kong food.

The airline also features one of the largest 4K in-flight entertainment libraries in Asia which is better than many leading airlines. Also, it features 4K HDR10 viewing screens in the new A350 fleet.



The airline has ordered:

A350-900: 30 ordered (all delivered and in service).

A350-1000: 18 ordered (all delivered and in service)

A350F Freighter: 8 ordered

Plus, they have a soft landing.

Cathay Pacific is one of the safest airlines in the world.

History between China and Hong Kong

by Leighton Chan

Here is a comprehensive, long-formed history of China and Hong Kong, with a focus on the prehistoric and ancient eras.

In the grand sweep of world history, the destinies of Hong Kong and mainland China have been deeply intertwined. This shared narrative did not begin with the colonial conflicts of the 19th century; rather, it dates back thousands of years to the prehistoric era. Archaeological excavations confirm that as early as the Neolithic period (around 4000 BC), the ancient Baiyue tribes had already settled in areas such as Tuen Mun, Lantau Island, and Lamma Island. Subsisting on fishing, foraging, and primitive agriculture, these early inhabitants left behind distinct geometric stamped pottery and rock carvings that shared identical cultural roots with the coastal regions of southern China.

The formal political connection was forged in 214 BC when Emperor Qin Shi Huang conquered the Lingnan region and established the commanderies of Nanhai, Xiang, and Guilin. Hong Kong was officially placed under the jurisdiction of Panyu County in Nanhai Commandery, marking its first inclusion into the imperial Chinese map.

For the next two millennia, regardless of which dynasty ruled the Central Plains, Hong Kong remained an inseparable part of Chinese territory. During the Han Dynasty, local salt production began to flourish, and the discovery of the Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb in Sham Shui Po revealed a material culture identical to that of mainland China. By the Tang Dynasty, Tuen Mun developed into a vital military garrison and outpost along the Maritime Silk Road, where the imperial court stationed troops to protect foreign merchant ships entering Guangzhou. Simultaneously, pearl harvesting in Tai Po and salt manufacturing on Lantau Island thrived. The Song Dynasty brought a massive wave of migration, as war in the north forced prominent clans (such as the Tang, Man, Pang, Liu, and Hau) to move south and settle in what is now the New Territories, bringing advanced agriculture and lineage culture. In the tragic final days of the Southern Song Dynasty, the child Emperor Bing and his court fled from Mongol invaders to Kowloon, leaving behind the historic Song Wong Toi relic and cementing Hong Kong's place in classical Chinese history.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the region was governed under Xin'an County, well-known for its fortified walled villages, Matsu (Tin Hau) temples, and the lucrative trade of incense wood (incense tree), from which the name "Hong Kong" (meaning "Fragrant Harbor") was derived.

This long era of agrarian and maritime isolation met a cataclysmic turning point in the 19th century. The British Empire, desperate to reverse its massive trade deficit caused by a ravenous demand for Chinese tea and silk, began smuggling highly addictive opium into China through the British East India Company. In response, the Qing government appointed Lin Zexu to Guangzhou to strictly enforce an opium ban. This ignited the First Opium War in 1840. The technologically outmatched Qing military suffered a decisive defeat, forcing the empire to sign the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842—the first of the "unequal treaties"—which ceded Hong Kong Island to Great Britain "in perpetuity." The British immediately began developing the island as a free port and naval base. Imperialist expansion continued, and following China's defeat in the Second Opium War (1856-1860), the Convention of Peking forced the cession of the southern tip of the Kowloon Peninsula south of Boundary Street.

Finally, in 1898, capitalizing on the Western powers' scramble for concessions in China, Britain compelled the weakening Qing government to sign the Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory. This leased the vast area north of Boundary Street up to the Shenzhen River, along with over 200 outlying islands, for a period of 99 years. Collectively known as the New Territories, this final acquisition completed the geographic boundaries of modern Hong Kong.

Under British colonial administration, Hong Kong gradually transformed from a peripheral fishing port into a major entrepôt for Far East trade, yet its fate remained tethered to the political winds of the mainland.

Major events like the 1911 Xinhai Revolution and the Canton-Hong Kong Strike of the 1920s sent deep shockwaves through the colony. In December 1941, during World War II, Japanese forces launched a swift invasion, defeating British forces in the Battle of Hong Kong. For the next "three years and eight months," the local population endured brutal Japanese military occupation, resulting in severe hardships and a drastic population decline due to starvation and forced deportations. Control was returned to Britain only after the surrender of Japan in August 1945.



The post-war era brought civil war to mainland China. Around the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, millions of refugees, wealthy industrialists, skilled technicians, and massive amounts of capital fled from the mainland to Hong Kong. This historic influx provided a surge of cheap labour and entrepreneurial talent just as the Western world imposed a trade embargo on the new communist state.

Blocked from its traditional role as a trading gateway, Hong Kong pivoted overnight, transforming into a booming manufacturing base focused on textiles, electronics, and plastics.

By the 1970s and 1980s, as mainland China launched its "Reform and Opening-up" policy, Hong Kong manufacturers moved their factories across the border into the Pearl River Delta. Hong Kong itself evolved once again, rising as a premier global hub for international finance, shipping, commerce, and tourism—earning its reputation as one of the "Four Asian Tigers." As the 1997 expiration date of the New Territories lease loomed, Britain recognized that the colony could not survive if the New Territories were separated from Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.

In the early 1980s, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher entered diplomatic negotiations over the future of Hong Kong. The Chinese government stood firm that sovereignty was non-negotiable and that the entire territory must be returned, while proposing the innovative concept of "One Country, Two Systems." The two nations signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, formalizing the handover.

At midnight on July 1, 1997, the British Union Jack was lowered, and the Chinese national flag alongside the Hong Kong Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) flag was raised. After more than 150 years of colonial rule, Hong Kong returned to China. Under the constitutional framework of the Basic Law, Hong Kong was granted a high degree of autonomy, its own legal system based on common law, and the preservation of its capitalist lifestyle for at least 50 years, opening a complex new chapter as the crucial "super-connector" between the mainland and the global economy.

Artwork

by Hebe Kwok

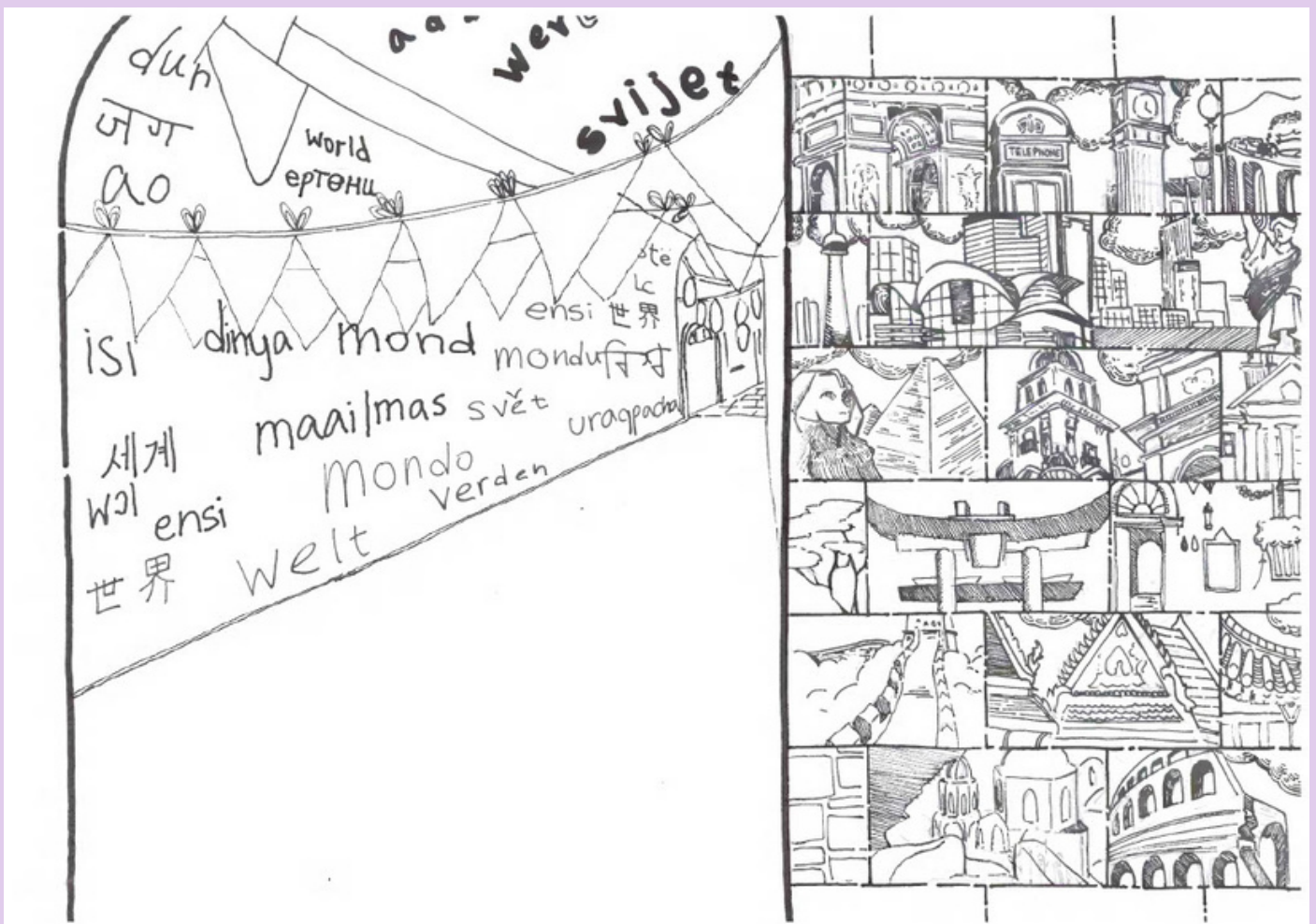




Fig12.1 EAL Gremlins

Credits:

Editors: Alvin, Bernadette

EAL coordinators: Mrs Shah, Mr Lau, Ms Parsons

Also thank you to all EAL members!!!

Thank you for reading this year's newsletter!

[2026]

END OF NEWSLETTER