

# Posties

## Paws-itive influence

By Marcus Lum

As a fluffy poodle enters the classroom, students exclaim, "It's Bear Bear!"

The dog is a "teacher" in the Professor Paws programme, in which therapy dogs help kids learn life skills. This is one of two animal-assisted programmes from an NGO called Animals Asia.

Therapy dogs like Bear Bear must be calm and obedient, and they take a strict exam before working with people.

Posties spoke to an Animals Asia worker and two volunteers to learn how animals can help people grow and learn.

### A class unlike any other

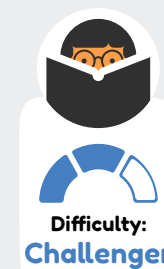
In Professor Paws, students learn English by interacting with therapy dogs.

Karina O'Carroll, Animals Asia's animal welfare education manager, said the programme was exciting for kids because it was different from their everyday classes.

"That excitement then translates to a willingness to learn," she said.

Wong Hung-kuen is a volunteer and Bear Bear's owner. He suggested that the first step in approaching a dog is watching how they act.

"Just stand and look. Don't force the dog to approach you. Let the dog come to you," Wong said. "If students are fearful, they can just sit wherever they feel comfortable."



### Dogs helping people

Animals Asia has another programme, Dr Dogs, in which therapy dogs support

the well-being of groups in need such as orphans and the elderly.

Wong and his wife, Hung May-shann, said their most memorable Dr Dogs experience was from 2018.

"An elderly man was in a bad mood that day and didn't want to talk with anyone. But when he saw Bear Bear, he spoke to her, and it turned out he was upset about his pillow," Wong explained.

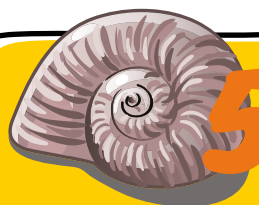
"Our dog was able to get that information and change the elderly man's day," Hung said.

Animals Asia's therapy dogs help people to express themselves.

Photos: SCMP



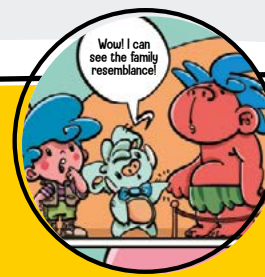
Scan for the audio, game and learning activities



5 Activities to help you dive into fossils



9 Learn how to manage your money



12 Peter, Pippa and pals visit the museum



Difficulty:  
**Summiteer**

# Fearless feline rescue



Firefighters use oxygen masks on cats saved from a fire in Hong Kong. Photo: Facebook/HKAnimalPost

Hong Kong firefighters saved 50 people and seven cats after a flat in a New Territories building caught fire.

According to police, a kitchen extractor hood caught fire, and the blaze spread. The fire was put out at around 2pm on March 3.

At least four of the cats inhaled smoke from the fire, and three were found unconscious.

Pictures posted online showed two cats lying on trays as firefighters used oxygen masks to help them breathe.

“They were not pet oxygen masks,” a Fire Services Department spokeswoman said. “The officers at the scene used those for humans or children to try to revive the cats.”

Officers from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) were also called to help treat the cats.

A spokesman from the SPCA said: “The firefighters provided immediate medical aid including oxygen administration and chest compression [to the cats].”

Two cats also fell from a height. Both were conscious, but one had a broken bone.

The SPCA spokesman said the cats’ owners allowed inspectors to take the seven animals for further treatment and examination at the organisation’s Tsing Yi Centre.

**Staff writers**

## QUIZ TIME

1. How many people were in the building when it caught fire?
2. What caused the fire in the flat?
3. What injuries did the cats sustain?
4. What aspect of the oxygen masks may have made it challenging for firefighters to use them on the cats?

## Plans for an ageing population

In March, two official government reports said China would improve its policies supporting childbirth, as well as its growing elderly population.

These plans are important because in 2023, China’s population fell for the second year in a row. The birth rate has dropped to half of the rate it was in 2016. If these trends continue, there will not be enough young workers to support so many elderly people.

The country hopes to boost birth rates by changing maternity and paternity leave

policies as well as increasing childcare services. Officials have also pushed housing subsidies and financial and tax incentives for couples having children. Still, some studies say China is one of the most expensive places to raise children, relative to how much money people earn.

To assist the elderly, China is increasing the amount given in its basic pensions. A private pension system will be created to give people more options. Elderly healthcare services will also be strengthened.

**Reuters**



5. Why does China want to change its childbirth policies?

The birth rate is the number of individuals born in a population in a certain amount of time. Photo: AFP



Answers: 1. 50; 2. a kitchen extractor hood caught fire; 3. three were found unconscious and one had a broken bone; 4. the masks were made for humans; 5. because its population fell for the second year in a row



## Ha-ha-happenings



Photo: AP

### Spread your wings and fly

Pilots in Dubai lined up on the runway and started their jet engines with an ear-splitting roar. But they weren't preparing to fly an aeroplane – they were the aircraft.

Dubai, a city in the United Arab Emirates, recently hosted its first jet suit race. Racers wore jet engines on their hands and backs that were more powerful than most luxury cars. They could reach speeds of 128km/h!

**Associated Press**

*What might everyday people in Dubai think of these "jet suits"?*

Send us a fun caption by scanning the code or emailing [editorial@posties.hk](mailto:editorial@posties.hk). We'll publish the best ones next week.



### Best caption from last week

**Marcella Chong Cho-leng**

*Aged 10, Santa Rosa de Lima English Secondary School*

How come I am so famous? Am I cute?



Photo: EPA-EFE



The controversy boosted bracelet orders so much that the girls struggled to keep up. Photo: AP

### Bracelet-making fundraiser for kids in Gaza

Some girls in the US state of Missouri were told to stop their fundraiser for children in Gaza.

They were part of Girl Scouts, a group aimed at empowering girls. The children's fundraising efforts began because the girls were uncomfortable selling biscuits while people were starving in Gaza, where Israel has been waging a war.

Thus, the young girls began making and selling bracelets to raise money for the Palestine Children's Relief Fund. Since the latest war in Gaza began, the organisation has been providing

food, medication, clothing and humanitarian aid.

But the girls got an email from the Girls Scouts of Eastern Missouri threatening legal action if they continued to sell bracelets. The group then left the national organisation.

Their leader, Palestinian-American Nawal Abuhamdeh, said: "We aspire to be part of an organisation that does not only advertise its desired values, but acts on them."

**Associated Press**

6. Why were these girls making bracelets?



Would you like to try beef-infused rice? Photo: TNS



7. How long does it take to grow the beef-infused rice grains?

### How do scientists put beef in rice?

A South Korean research team has invented a new way to get protein: beef-infused rice. But how would this work?

Firstly, the beef does not come from a cow – instead, it is grown in a lab. The rice is made by growing animal muscle and fat cells inside the rice grains.

After nine to 11 days of growing, the inside and outside of the rice grains develop a different texture, nutritional profile and flavour.

"Imagine obtaining all the nutrients we need from ... protein rice," said the study's author, Sohyeon Park.

According to the press release, the beef rice uses safe and affordable ingredients that help make the final product "sustainable to produce and easy on the wallet". Beef rice has passed the first round of tests, but researchers are still improving it before selling it.

**Tribune News Service**

Answers: 6. They were raising money for the Palestine Children's Relief Fund; 7. nine to 11 days

## Planting the seeds

By Sue Ng

In the midst of Hong Kong's bustling cityscape, a group of urban designers hopes to draw attention to the plants blossoming quietly in this concrete jungle. These plants are more than just decorations; they are a way to build a sense of community.

In 2021, One Bite Social launched the Community Plant Library to share stories of the city's plants. The idea for this project came from a job invitation to promote sustainability in San Po Kong.

"We initially thought the place was just an industrial area, but after a visit, we found it to be diverse. Many shops have plants. Each plant held a captivating story, like a book waiting to be read," recalled Sarah Mui, the co-founder of One Bite Social, the charity branch of One Bite, an architecture company that aims to create positive impact through design.

The plant library collected stories from the shops and designed installations about their plants. The team encouraged residents to build connections by donating and adopting plants. They also hosted workshops on topics such as plant dyes and upcycling coffee grounds.

With funding from Partnerships for Community Development, the project



Photo: Sun Yeung

**Stop and think**  
How does the Plant Library create connections and promote sustainability?

expanded to Sheung Wan and Sham Shui Po and ended last October. Mui added that they want to help people see their neighbourhood in a new way through plants.

### Blossoming community

Although the project in Sheung Wan has ended, its impact remains. The team trained volunteers to become plant librarians for their neighbourhoods.

They also put together a community map for the residential area with more than 20 spots where people can find plants, learn about

their stories and get involved with interactive installations.

Catherine Chao, the urban designer at One Bite Social leading the project, recounted a story from

a Japanese cafe, Mixo, where some customers used a nearby *Dracaena fragrans* to dispose of cigarette butts.

"To address this issue, we placed an ashtray next to the plant with a sign that read 'Save our plant'. It was helpful as people did place their cigarette butts in the ashtray," Chao said. "The situation has improved a lot."

Chloe Ting, another urban researcher, added: "Beautifying [a place] doesn't require too much work or expertise. Sometimes, you just need to water the plants or pick up cigarette butts to help them contribute and thrive in the community."



### HANDY PHRASES

**in the midst:** in the middle of an event, situation or activity

**sense of community:** the feeling of belonging to a group of people



### WORD POWER

**industrial:** relates to the word industry, meaning the companies and factories that produce goods to sell

**sustainability:** taking care of the Earth to preserve its natural resources

**upcycling:** reusing old materials to create a new product



### THINK ABOUT IT

1. What inspired the idea to launch the Community Plant Library?
2. How did Mixo respond after customers put cigarette butts in one of their plants?



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



## Dive into marine fossils

**M**arine fossils are the remains of sea creatures that lived long ago.

One of the most famous marine fossils is the ammonite. This animal had a coiled shell and lived in shallow seas. They first appeared about 450 million years ago and died out about 66 million years ago. These spiral-shaped creatures came in different sizes. Some were just a few millimetres. But others could even have been 3.5 metres tall! Ammonites are extinct now, but they are closely related to today's squid and octopuses.

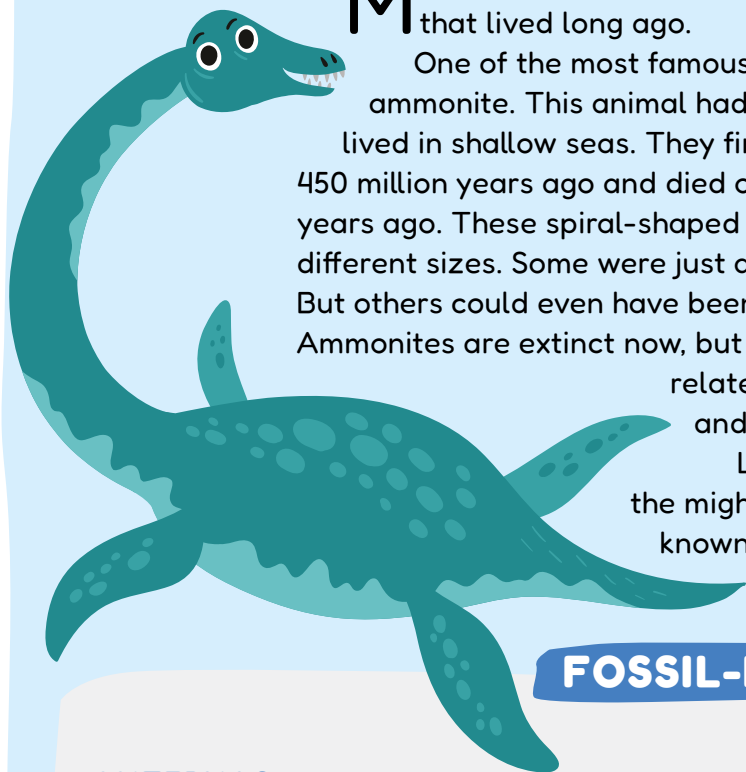
Let's not forget about the mighty marine reptile known as the plesiosaur!

They first appeared about 215 million years ago and were around for more than 100 million years.

Plesiosaurs were massive animals that could grow to be 15 metres long. Many of them had large bodies and small triangular heads. Their sharp teeth helped them grasp and crush fish, squid, clams and crustaceans.

Scientists have found crushed clams and snails in the fossilised stomachs of plesiosaurs. They also found large, polished pebbles called gastroliths. These pebbles could have been used to crush the hard shells the plesiosaurs ate.

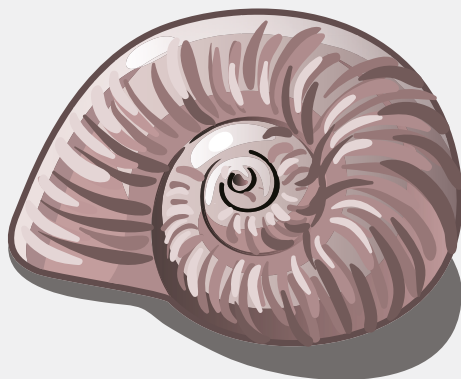
Researchers believe the gastroliths helped plesiosaurs eat many different foods. This could be why this group of marine reptiles survived for so long.



### FOSSIL-MAKING

#### MATERIALS

- 1 cup of flour
- ¼ cup of salt
- warm water
- objects to make into fossils (seashells or small toys)
- baking sheet
- paint and brushes (optional)



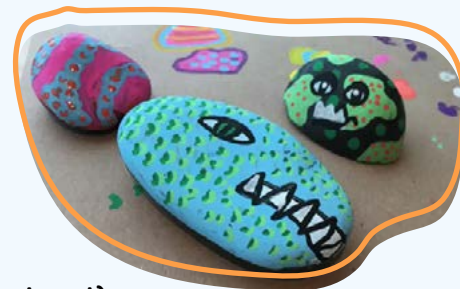
#### DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat your oven to 100 degrees Celsius.
- 2 Mix the flour and salt in a bowl. Add warm water, one spoon at a time, until the mixture sticks together. Use your hands to mix the dough until it forms a big ball.
- 3 Pinch off some dough and roll it into a ball. The amount you need depends on the size of your object. Flatten the ball until it is 1cm thick.
- 4 Press an object into the dough to make an imprint. Make sure it does not go through the dough. Repeat with the other objects. This step is similar to how some real fossils form. Dirt around the organism turns to stone. After the body dissolves, it leaves a mould.
- 5 Put the fossils on a baking sheet and bake for 90 minutes. Once they cool, you can paint your creations.

### GASTROLITH PETS

#### MATERIALS

- 2-3 pebbles
- paint and brushes
- glue (optional)
- cardboard pieces (optional)



#### DIRECTIONS

- 1 Some animals eat rocks to help them digest their food. These are called gastroliths. You can make your own using rocks. Decide if you want to make them look like creatures, food, or anything else you can think of!
- 2 Use your paint to draw on the pebbles. Wait for each layer of paint to dry before you add the next layer. Give your gastrolith a face. Paint the whites of the eyes and teeth, then add black outlines.
- 3 If you like, you can even cut out arms and legs from the cardboard pieces and stick them on the gastroliths.
- 4 Name your gastroliths. Then, use them to tell others what you've learned about dinosaurs!



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

Feature  
of the  
week

## Good Hope Primary School cum Kindergarten

BY JANICE CHEUNG (AGED 9)

When you hear the words “fun fair”, your mind might go to food. But here at Good Hope, it was also a chance for us to appreciate our students’ music.

Our Christmas Fun Fair was held on December 16. It featured performances from the choir, orchestra, Chinese instrument players and dance groups. Teachers and student ambassadors also prepared presents for us: pens, stickers, tape and even toys.

That day, everyone gained something, whether it was a gift or a valuable memory. For the students graduating from our school this year, it was a lovely memory they could take to secondary school.

Janice’s sister, her friend, and Janice enjoy the booths at their school’s fun fair.  
Photos: Handout



Photos: Handout

# OUR READERS

Your say

## YUNICE WAN TSZ-YU

Aged 6, St Rose of Lima's School

My favourite animal is a cat named BBQ. He is my godfather's pet, and he is only one year old.



BBQ is brown and white. He has a little head, two round blue eyes, and a long, soft, furry tail that I love to touch. He has sharp claws, so my godfather needs to trim them regularly.

BBQ likes cleaning himself and eating fish. I love to play hide-and-seek with BBQ whenever I visit my godfather. BBQ is very friendly with me, and I have a lot of fun playing with him. Having a pet is a lifelong promise, and we should take good care of them.

## GWYNETH HOE

Sacred Heart Canossian School (Private Section)

A recent issue of Posties featured a story about cute fluffy dogs that provide therapy through an NGO called Animals Asia. Dogs are so smart that they can even help children and the elderly. This was a very meaningful story!



I have dogs, too, and I love them. They make my heart melt when I see them. I feel so happy when I pet their fluffy fur. My grandparents and auntie also have dogs who can do tricks like sit, stand, spin and give their left and right paws. I wonder if our dogs are as smart as the ones at Animals Asia. I wish they could provide therapy to help people.

## CHARLOTTE LAU WING-CHING

St Paul's Convent School (Primary Section)

Did you know that around 42 million trees are cut down every day? If this rate continues, nearly one-fourth of the world's trees will be gone in just a few years!



Chopping down forests also destroys animals' habitats. This could start a chain reaction, as all living creatures depend on one another to live. Eventually, humans will have to face the consequences of our actions.

If we don't stop destroying forests, we will lose many precious resources. However, if we can stop this, we can pave the path to a brighter future.



Scan to send your letters, top picks and school events, or email us at [editorial@posties.hk](mailto:editorial@posties.hk)

Top pick

## EDGAR LEE YIN-NAM

Aged 8, Pui Ching Primary School

I would like to recommend the film *Wonka*. It is about Willy Wonka, a chocolate maker. He is full of hope and believes he will achieve his goal of opening a shop and selling handmade chocolate. His chocolate is delicate and has layers of ingredients.

Wonka's most famous and interesting chocolates are hoverchocs and silver linings. Hoverchocs are like beetles. They can make you fly into

the sky for a few minutes and land on the ground. Silver linings inspire you when you eat them and are particularly useful when facing problems.

Not only is Wonka a great chocolate maker, but he always perseveres. Although he faces many difficulties on his journey, he doesn't give up until he achieves his goal.



Photo: Warner Bros Pictures/TNS

Wonka keeps his happy and inspiring spirit, no matter what happens to him.

This movie taught me not to give up when I face obstacles in life.

## Junk food and the brain

By Doris Wai

Many people enjoy sweet drinks and deep-fried snacks. However, they are not the best for our health.

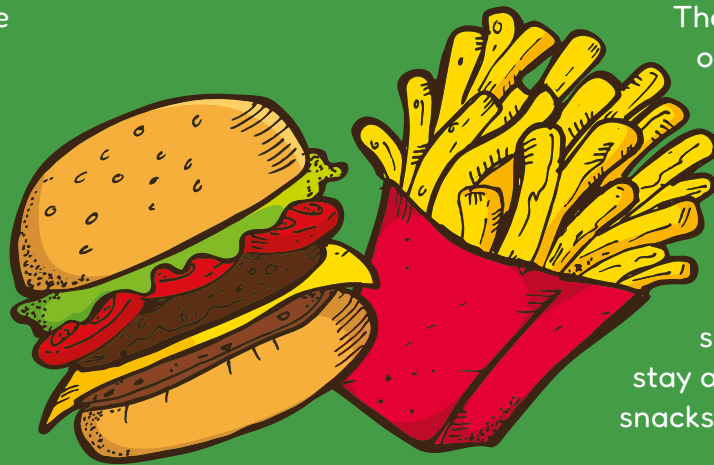
Still, we might get cravings for these foods. This is because of the brain's reward system. When we do things that are good for us, like eating healthy food, our brain releases a chemical called dopamine.

Dopamine is often called the "happy hormone" because it makes us feel good. It also encourages us to repeat the behaviour (see graphic).

However, the reward system can be tricked by harmful things that feel good. For example, junk food can trick our brains into thinking we are eating very little. In fact, we are eating a lot of calories in a short time.

Junk food contains lots of sugar, salt and unhealthy fats. Eating lots of junk food for a long time can cause serious health issues. These include digestion problems, heart disease and obesity.

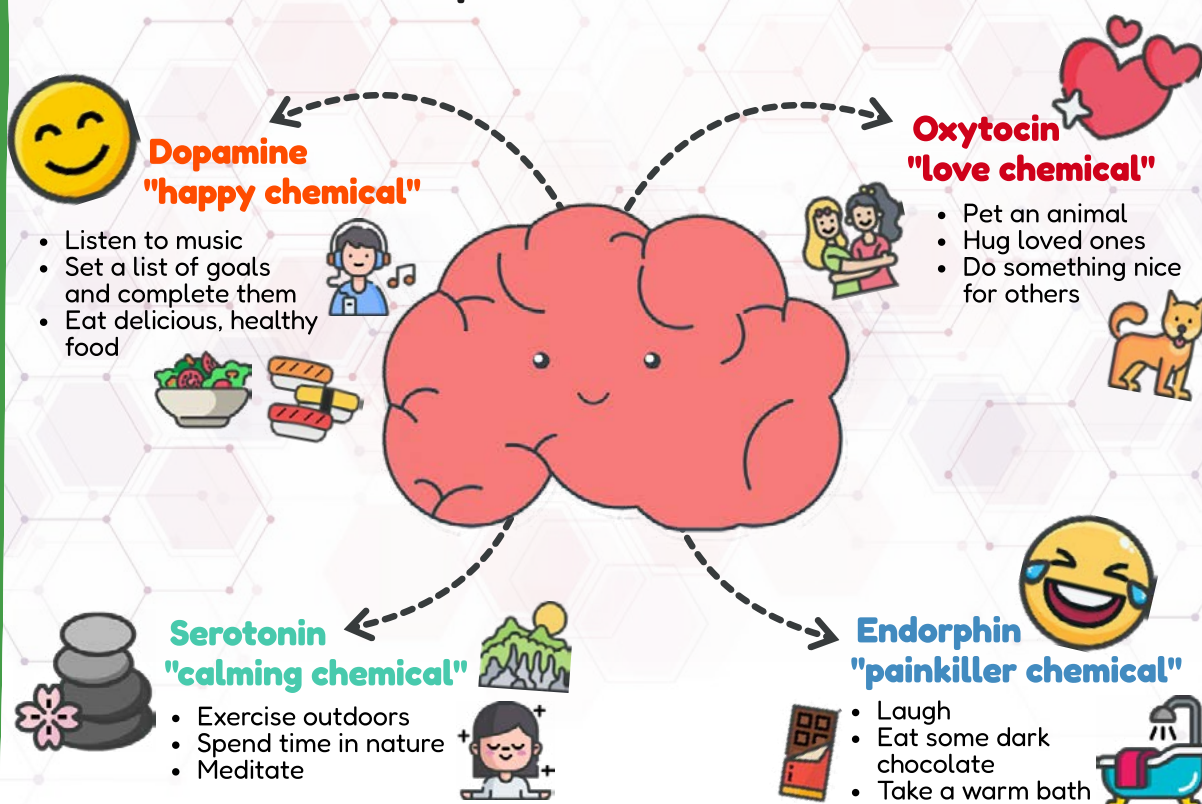
There are ways to overcome our cravings for these snacks. One way is to eat more protein. Protein digests more slowly, making us feel fuller for longer. Getting enough sleep can also help us stay away from unhealthy snacks.



How does junk food trick our brains?

Why is eating protein and getting enough sleep important for our health?

Dopamine is not the only chemical in our brains that makes us feel good. Here are other ones that boost our mood and some activities that produce them.



Source: Healthline

Graphic: Doris Wai

Content provided by  

**香港科學館**  
**HONG KONG**  
**SCIENCE MUSEUM**





Once a month, our Health and Happiness page – which is dedicated to student well-being and growth – will feature Life Skills advice.

**What are some tips for learning to manage my money?**

It's good to keep track of your spending habits – it's very easy to get carried away if you don't. Here are a few tips on how to manage your money to avoid going broke.

### **Put it away for a rainy day**

Start by putting a portion of your money aside as savings each month. It doesn't have to be much; even five or 10 per cent will add up to a nice figure by the end of the year. Keep the money out of sight so you're not tempted to spend it.

### **Come up with a budget ... and stick to it!**

Decide how much you would like to spend each month and allocate that amount to paying for things. There are a number of budgeting apps that can help you stay on track.

### **Awareness is key**

Consider writing down how much money you spend daily and what you buy. It will take some effort to track your expenses, but having a physical record can help you see where all your money has been going – and the numbers might surprise you.

### **Fight the urge to splurge**

We often spend money on things we don't actually need. The next time you feel the urge to buy something, ask yourself if you really need it. The answer will most likely be no. Just walk away!



**Talk it out**



**How can I reward myself with the money I have saved?**

**What are some ways I can have fun without spending money?**

On this page, you will find practical tips and advice to help you in your personal development

## Laughing lessons



What do dinosaurs use for their kitchen floors?  
*Rep-tiles (reptiles)*

Which dinosaur sleeps all day?  
*The dino-snore*



## Spot the differences



## Riddle



I can be as big as a dinosaur, and you'll find me by its side.

I can move just as fast as the dinosaur, but it doesn't attack me.

I love the sunlight, but you will never find me at night.

What am I?



## KEEP EXPLORING



Hello, young explorers and curious parents! Interested in learning more about the fascinating world of dinosaurs and how life has evolved over billions of years? Head to the "Extinction - Resilience" exhibition at the Hong Kong Science Museum.

The exhibition features over 100 sets of precious fossil specimens to admire. Learn how fossils are formed and discovered while immersing yourself in fun, educational and interactive exhibits.

**Where to go:** The Hong Kong Science Museum's "Extinction - Resilience" exhibition

**Address:** 2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong

**Opening hours:** Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays 10am to 7pm (box office closes at 6pm); Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays 10am to 9pm (box office closes at 8pm); Closed on Thursdays (except public holidays)

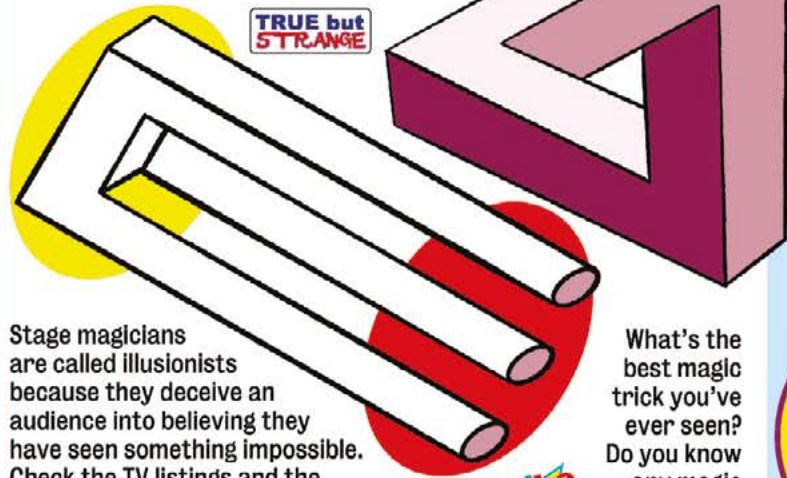


Riddle answer:  
The dinosaur's shadow

**CREATE YOUR OWN OPTICAL ILLUSION!**

It looks like a happy cat ... until you turn it sideways, and it becomes a bird! Follow our step-by-step drawing guide and create an illusion to amaze your friends!

Your eyes record scenes, and those images are interpreted by your brain. Sometimes, in trick pictures like the ones shown here, your brain is deceived into thinking that you see something that isn't actually there. That's called an "optical illusion."

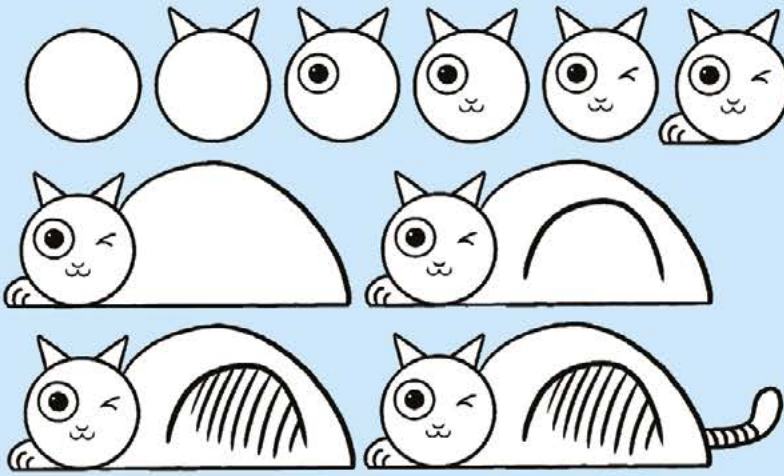


**TRUE but STRANGE**

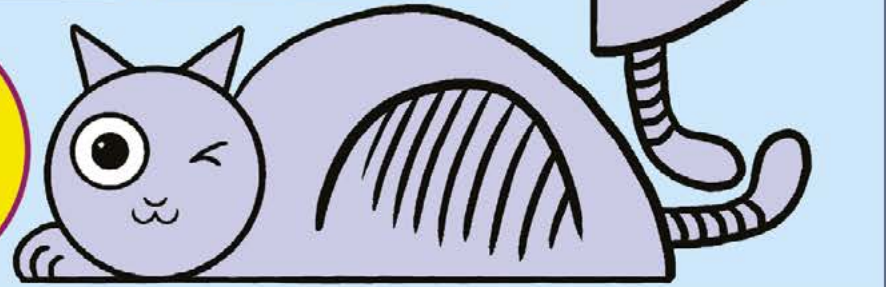
Stage magicians are called illusionists because they deceive an audience into believing they have seen something impossible. Check the TV listings and the entertainment pages to see if there are any magicians appearing soon.

**Use the News**

What's the best magic trick you've ever seen? Do you know any magic tricks you can perform?

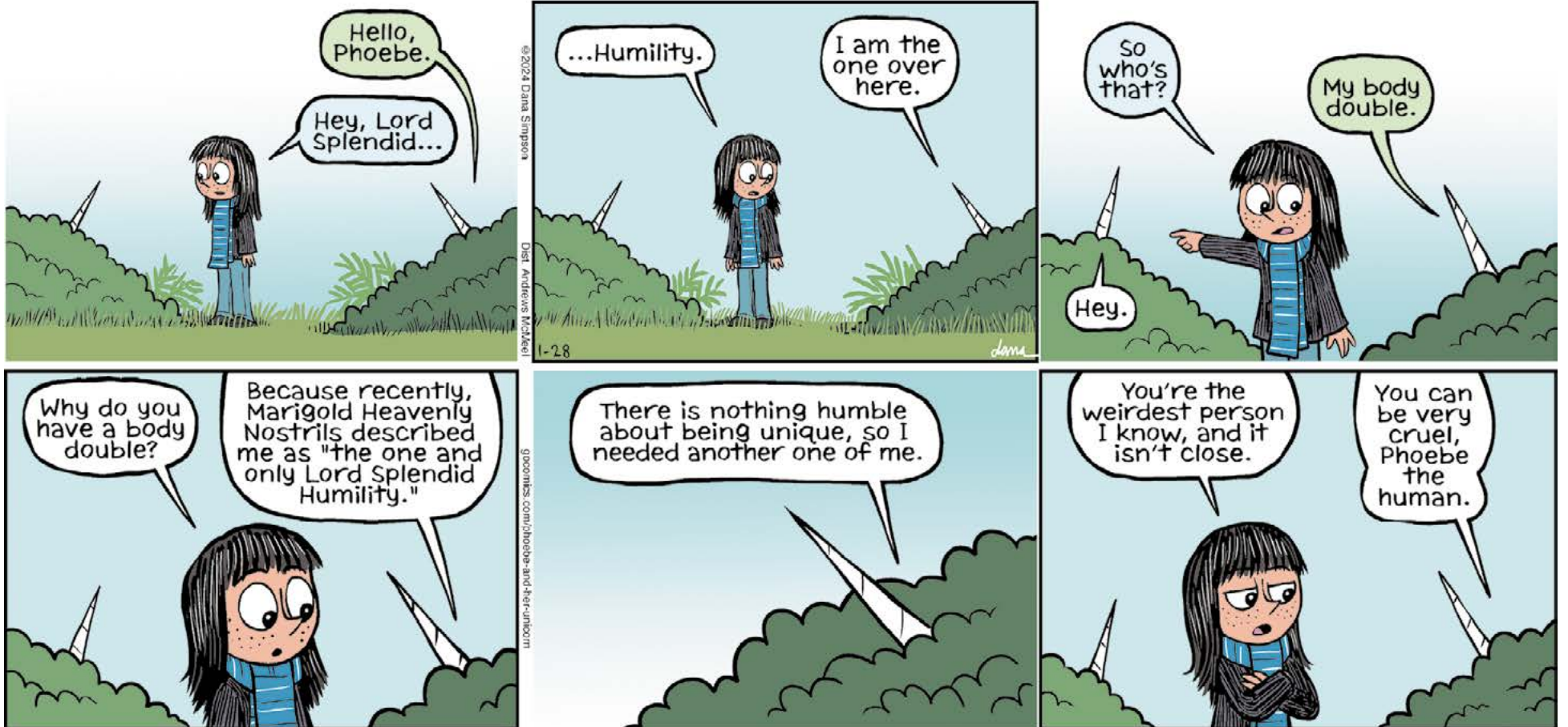


**CAT OR BIRD?**



**PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN**

BY DANA SIMPSON



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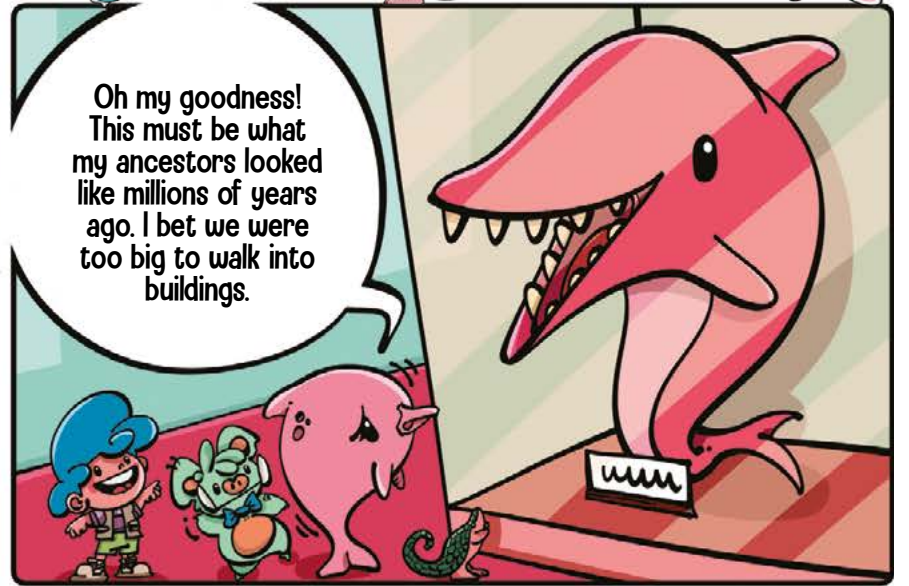
# Roto Ripa And Pals

By Victor Sanjinez

Text: Dannie Aildasani  
Ink and colour: Eunice Tse



I'm so excited to finally check out this exhibit. I've been waiting for a long time!



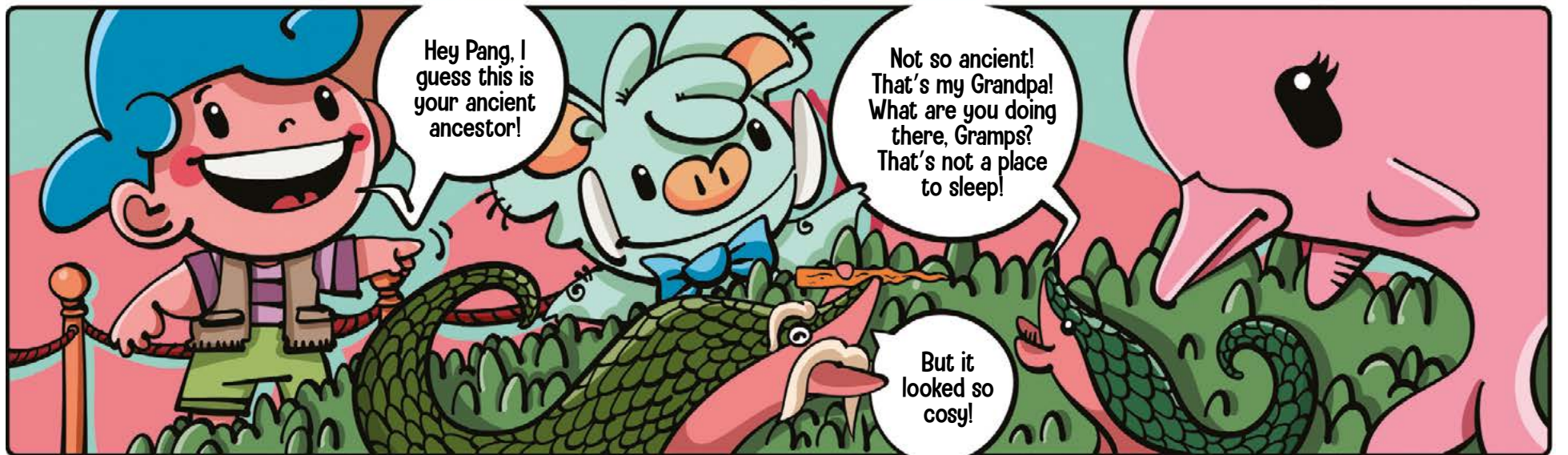
Oh my goodness! This must be what my ancestors looked like millions of years ago. I bet we were too big to walk into buildings.



It looks like your ancestors have always been very well-dressed!



Wow! I can see the family resemblance!



Hey Pang, I guess this is your ancient ancestor!

Not so ancient! That's my Grandpa! What are you doing there, Gramps? That's not a place to sleep!

But it looked so cosy!

Did you know?

The *Pakicetus*, the world's "first whale", had a land animal's body, but its long skull was similar to a whale's head.

Pangolins are the only mammals covered in scales, which protect them from injuries and infections.

A microscopic creature named *Saccorhytus* is the oldest known ancestor of many animals, including humans. Its body had one large opening that was likely used for both eating and excreting waste.