

Your letters

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A wolf at Yellowstone National Park. DaoZhen thinks reintroducing animals back into the wild must be done thoughtfully. [Photo: Mike Van Dalen.]

Rewilding is a double-edged sword

From: DaoZhen, Pri 6, Telok Kurau Primary

I read the article on rewilding in the February 2021 issue of What's Up, and I agree that rewilding, like many things in life, is a **double-edged** sword. Rewilding has significant potential to increase biodiversity and create self-sustainable environments. Rewilding aims to do this by reintroducing lost animal species to natural environments. The results of rewilding can only be satisfactory if you reintroduce into the wild the correct number of the certain species. One example of this would be the case of Yellowstone National Park. Before the wolves were reintroduced, the drastic increase of the number of elks and coyotes also proved to create big problems. Too many or too few of a species will both pose a danger to the existing environment.

However, reintroducing species has its dangers. For example, animals transported from other countries might have diseases, which if released into the wild, would have terrible consequences. Animals which are bred by humans from young might also not have the ability to survive in the wild on their own. In addition, during the period of

the species' absence, the environment might have changed to make up for the species' absence. If the species is reintroduced after that happens, the reintroduction may have a negative impact.

I think rewilding must be done with extreme care, lest it makes matters worse. In my opinion, we humans should not take unnecessary risks by introducing into environments species which the environments have not been exposed to before, just because we think it would help make things better. If we do this, we might create a new invasive species.

On the contrary, if everything is done perfectly, an entire ecosystem could be saved. In conclusion, rewilding is an amazing thing. But it must be done with extreme caution to prevent disastrous results. Rewilding should be done with proper studies and research, with the help or advice from experts.

If I had superpowers

From: Zoell, Pri 5, Qihua Primary

If I had superpowers, I would rewind the clock and go back to year 2019. That was the year when COVID-19 struck many countries and it made 2020 a year that everyone around the world could not forget. COVID-19 is one of the scariest diseases. It is more infectious than SARS. It kills and causes many people to be sick. Worst of all, it separates many families.

I used to be a daily **commuter**, travelling from Johor Bahru to Singapore for school. Due to COVID-19, I could not attend school physically for a period of time and had to go through live-recorded lessons from where I stayed. However, I eventually made the choice to stay in Singapore so that my learning would not be affected too much. As a result, I have to be painfully separated from my family for more than 300 days and counting. During this period, when we cannot see each other in person, we can only resort to video calls.

Therefore, if I had superpowers, I would turn back time to stop the further spreading of this disease around the world. I wish we could go back to the past when everything was normal and fine. Most importantly, I wish I could be with my family just like old times.

What's Up replies: Zoell, one year is a very long time to be away from your family. Since none of us can turn the clock back, let's hope time flies! Do write to us again to share the good news when you are reunited with your family.



People protesting in Myanmar.
Soe La Wun Khine worries for her relatives who live there.
[Photo: MgHla (aka) Htin Linn Aye.]

Worried about relatives in Myanmar

From: La Wun, Pri 6, Changkat Primary

I read the article “People of Myanmar want the army to give their country back” (March 2021). And honestly, I felt enraged.

I was born in Myanmar and I lived there until I was one year old. We moved to Singapore since my father worked as an engineer here, and my mother decided that it was best for my whole family to live here for our education. I am very grateful that I do not live in Myanmar, especially with everything that is happening at the moment.

I am utterly worried for the rest of my family who live in Myanmar — my cousins, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Every day, I fear for their lives and hope that they are okay. It is also a bit hard to contact them because of the internet connection issues. But, I try my best to contact them every day. The fact that the military is also injuring and killing people, including children, really upsets me. The children did nothing wrong! But, at the same time, I am proud of the people protesting. I hope that the military will back down and everything in Myanmar will be back to normal soon.

What's Up replies: La Wun, we are so glad that you and your immediate family are safe in Singapore. What is happening in Myanmar is indeed very worrying. Many of us here feel very sad about the violence there. We join you in hoping that peace and harmony will return soon.

We did it together!

From: Vijayan, Pri 6, Woodlands Ring Primary

Life during the pandemic is totally unusual. “Work from home”, “online lessons” and, not to forget, “zoom” are now common words that we hear very frequently these days. However, the best part of it is, despite all these challenges, we all managed to stay united as one nation. We wear masks and maintain social distancing, even up to now. We do this not just to protect ourselves but also our loved ones and our fellow Singaporeans. This shows our care and social responsibility. Right now, the number of COVID cases is very few. It is all because of us. We should all feel proud that we did it together. In the words of Ryunosuke Satoro, “Individually we are a drop, together we are an ocean.”

Don't be shy. Share your ideas!

From: Xin En, Pri 5, Punggol Primary

For people who think that they cannot contribute to society because of their status or living environment, they should feel that they can after reading the article “Humble teacher shares his big prize with others” (March 2021).

It is inspiring to know that Mr Ranjitsinh Disale, a primary school teacher teaching in one of India's rural villages, has come up with electronic learning resources to help his students learn better. These resources not only help his students, but also students from all over India. This is a great inspiration for people of all ages.

Everyone plays a part in making the world a better place. For those who want to contribute to society but are afraid to do so, it would be great to tell them that they should bravely share their ideas. They need not be affected by what others say. The world is so advanced now because of the millions of ideas that people shared courageously.

Just be brave and share your ideas. After all, you never know if your idea could impact the whole world.

More recess time, please

From: Peiyao, Pri 6, Nan Chiau Primary

Recess is the time of the day that most students really look forward to. It is a time when students can replenish their energy and relax. But, do students have enough time to even finish a meal during recess?

According to experts, eating too fast on a regular basis is unhealthy for the body. However, school recess is only 25 mins long. Students have to queue for food, wash their hands, and return their plates. All these activities would take at least 10 mins. Students are also advised to go to the toilet and refill their bottles during recess so as to minimise movement during classes. That will take up another 5 mins. Along with measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, students also have to wipe down tables during recess.

Due to the lack of time, students now have no choice but to gobble down their food as fast as they can. Doing so can lead to some health issues. What can we do to solve this problem then? End school at a later time so that students can have a longer recess? It will take time to implement this. But, if it is the only way for students to be able to eat their meals properly, then why not?

Climate change is a big deal

From: Saki, Pri 6, Haig Girls'

Some people may think that climate change is not much of a big deal and that our generation would not be affected by it. At first, I also felt the same way. I had thought that since I was just a child, even if I tried to make a change, it would not mean much. But, as I grew older, I started to understand how grave the situation of climate change was.

Climate change is slowly but surely, killing our Earth. This is the only planet we can live on and yet, some of our actions are harming the Earth. If we all work together and do our part, we can save the environment. I realised that I should never **underestimate** the power of one. We can just do a few simple actions such as turning off the light when we are not using it or taking shorter showers. If everyone does so, it would make a great difference.

I think that talking about conservation is easy but taking the first step requires much more. I think that it would be even better if "resource defence" is one of Singapore's pillars of Total Defence. It would raise more awareness on the importance of saving the environment and our Earth. After all, this is our only Earth.

VOCAB BUILDER

commuter (say "ko-miu-ter"; noun) = someone who regularly travels between home and school or work.

underestimate (say "an-der es-ti-mayt"; verb) = to think that something is less than it really is.

double-edged (say "da-bel ej'd"; adjective) = having two possible outcomes, one negative and one positive.