

# Learning and Teaching Materials on "SOW Inspiring" Book Gifting Competition

Secondary Level



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

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# 01 What is “SOW Inspiring” Book Gifting Competition?

In the “SOW Inspiring” Book Gifting Competition organised under the campaign on “Promoting Positive Values and Attitudes through English Sayings of Wisdom 2024/25” (SOW Campaign 2024/25), students are to present a **book of their choice** as a gift to someone dear to them by **writing a message with a saying of wisdom (SOW) taken from the book and creating a piece of two-dimensional (2D) artwork** to enhance conveyance of meaning and visual representation of the message.

# 01 What is “SOW Inspiring” Book Gifting Competition?

Each entry should include:

A saying of wisdom (SOW) taken from the book that echoes the **overarching theme** and/or the four **sub-themes**



The reason(s) why the book is chosen for the recipient(s), how the book has inspired you and how it will resonate with and inspire him/her/them



A photo or a piece of two-dimensional (2D) artwork that represents and enhances the message



# Overarching Theme and Sub-themes

## SOW Campaign 2024/25

Overarching  
theme

SOW the Reading Seed: Inspire and Be Inspired

Sub-themes

**R**esilience  
**E**mpowerment  
**A**ppreciation  
**D**elight



# Book-gifting Message to Someone Dear to You



## Word limit

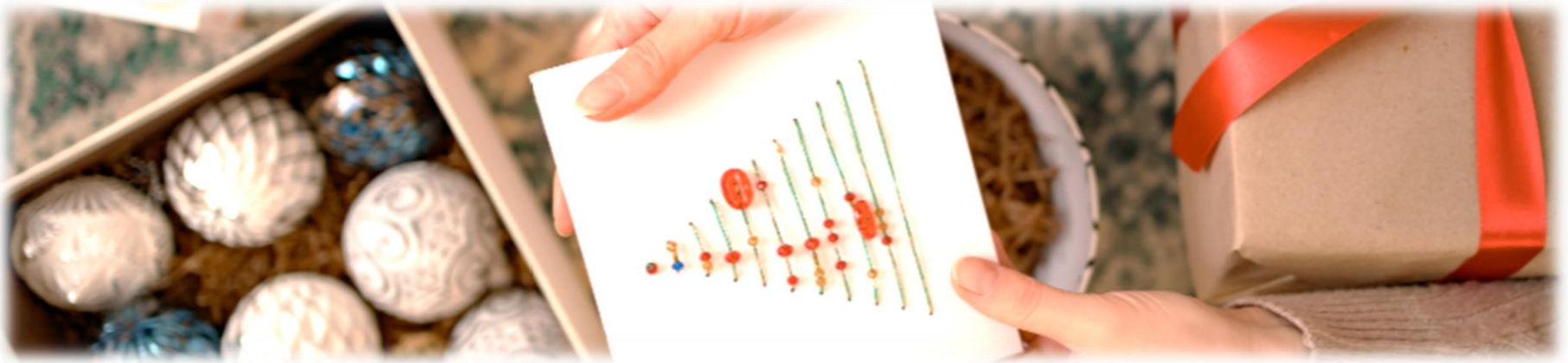


Junior Secondary Division (Secondary 1 – 3):  
**180-250 words**



Senior Secondary Division (Secondary 4 – 6):  
**230-300 words**

## 2D Artwork that Represents and Enhances the Message



**A4 size (max)**



**hand-drawn / digitalised  
(e.g. photos, computer graphics)**



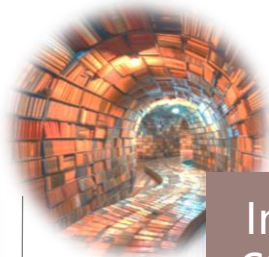
**No copyrighted or patented materials  
should be included**

## 02 Why gift books to someone dear to you?



### Personal Connection

Books can serve as a **window** into interests, passions and experiences. You can create a **deeper connection and a shared experience** with your loved ones through a book you handpick for them.



### Intellectual Stimulation

Books are a **gateway** that leads us to new knowledge and new perspectives. Gifting a book can **inspire the personal growth and development** of your loved ones.



### Emotional Impact

Books are like **trusted companions** that can **offer congratulations and celebration for achievements** (e.g. graduation, retirement, success) and **provide comfort and encouragement during difficult times** (e.g. bereavement, life transition, addiction, illness).



# 03 Who to gift your book to and how can it inspire him/her?



Identify  
someone dear  
to your heart

Who do you know is  
experiencing  
**a change/difficulties/  
achievements** in his/her life  
right now?



Identify a book  
you have read

Which book echoes the  
**overarching theme and/or  
sub-themes** and could  
possibly resonate with and  
inspire him/her?



Identify someone dear  
to your heart

Examples


Recipient(s)	Situation facing him/her/them
My father	He has been practising for marathon and wants to break through a running plateau.
My uncle and aunt	They will soon kick off their retirement by travelling by themselves for the first time.
A newly-arrived Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) student	She has just arrived in Hong Kong and joined your school in this school year. She wants to know more about Hong Kong and Chinese culture.
My best friend	He struggles with studies and some academic subjects are a challenge for him. He sees himself as a slow learner and lacks confidence.
My class teacher	She has been teaching my class for three years and is about to see us graduate.
My sister	She has been selected for an international exchange programme and will take part in the Youth Leadership Summit to meet young leaders from different countries.
My cousin	He is suffering from Internet addiction and feels frustrated because he does not know how to unplug from social media and online gaming.



## Identify a book you have read

After identifying the recipient(s), think of a book that can inspire him/her/them and a SOW taken from the book that can leave a lasting impact on him/her/them while echoing the overarching theme and/or sub-themes.

### Example 1


Recipient	A book that can inspire him/her/them	A SOW from the book that can leave a lasting impact on him/her/them	Overarching theme and/or sub-theme
My father, who has been practising for marathon and wants to break through a running plateau	<b><i>What I Talk About When I Talk About Running</i></b> - Haruki Murakami	<b><i>"In long-distance running the only opponent you have to beat is yourself, the way you used to be."</i></b>	Resilience 



## Identify a book you have read

After identifying the recipient(s), think of a book that can inspire him/her/them and a SOW taken from the book that can leave a lasting impact on him/her/them while echoing the overarching theme and/or sub-themes.

### Example 2

Recipients	A book that can inspire him/her/them	A SOW from the book that can leave a lasting impact on him/her/them	Overarching theme and/or sub-theme
My uncle and aunt, who will soon kick off their retirement by travelling the world by themselves for the first time	<b><i>Around the World in Eighty Days</i></b> - Jules Verne	<b><i>"I see that it is by no means useless to travel, if a man wants to see something new."</i></b>	Delight 



## Identify a book you have read

After identifying the recipient(s), think of a book that can inspire him/her/them and a SOW taken from the book that can leave a lasting impact on him/her/them while echoing the overarching theme and/or sub-themes.

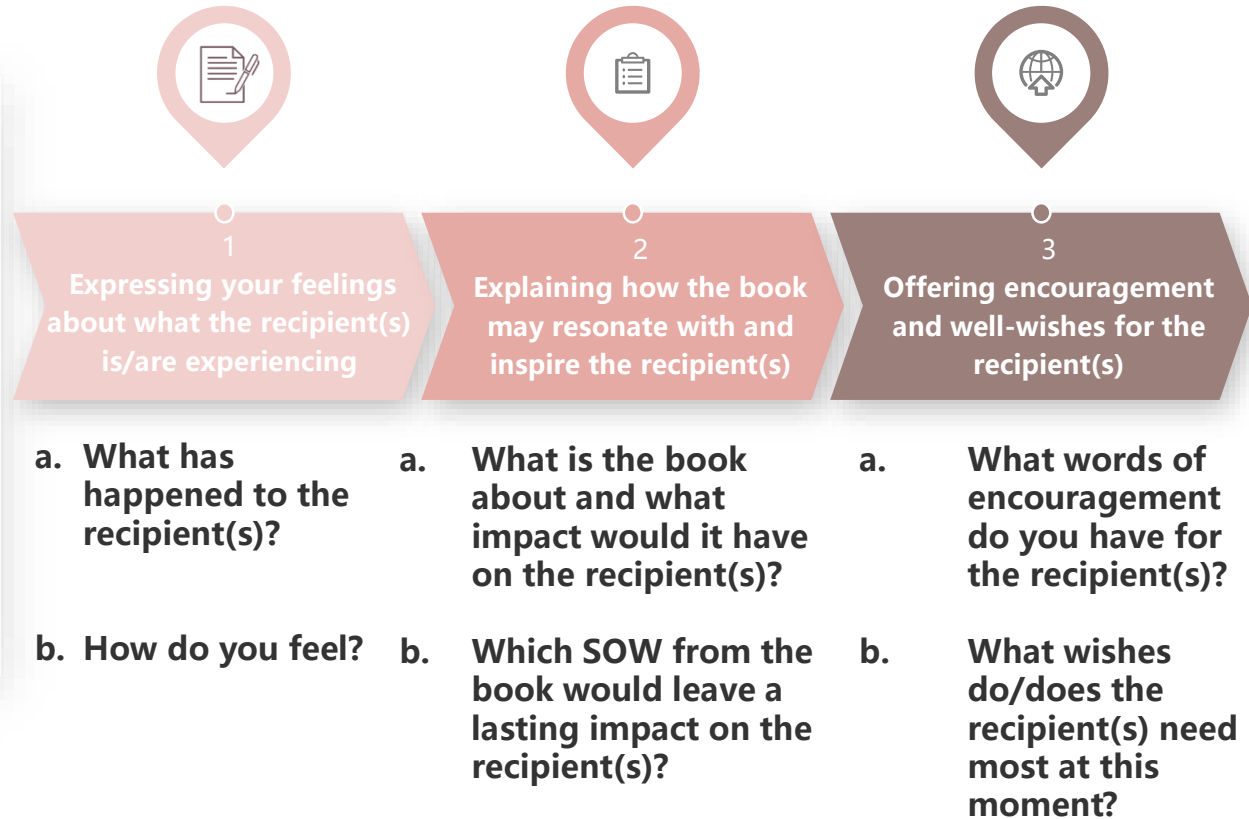
### Example 3

Recipient	A book that can inspire him/her/them	A SOW from the book that can leave a lasting impact on him/her/them	Overarching theme and/or sub-theme
My sister, who has been selected for an international exchange programme and will take part in the Youth Leadership Summit to meet young leaders from different countries	<b><i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i></b> - Dale Carnegie	<b><i>"All men have fears, but the brave put down their fears and go forward."</i></b>	Empowerment



## 04 How to generate ideas for the book-gifting message?

After identifying the recipient(s), the book and a SOW from the book, you may follow these steps to **generate ideas** and **express your love, care and support**.



# Sample 1

Dad,

I know the last few months of training for your first marathon have been a rollercoaster ride. The long runs, the early mornings, the sweats and pains – it's not been easy. I know there have been moments of frustration especially when you've hit that stubborn running plateau and wondered if you could really push through. But through it all, I've been in awe of your unwavering dedication and determination. You haven't let anything stand in your way, and the resilience you display inspires me every single day.

It reminds me of a line Haruki Murakami wrote in his book ***What I Talk About When I Talk About Running***: "In long-distance running the only opponent you have to beat is yourself, the way you used to be." Those words really resonate with me, and I think they may resonate with you too. As an avid runner himself, Murakami understands the journey you're on - the battle to surpass your own previous limitations and unlock your full potential.

I hope that in these pages, you'll find solace, wisdom, and a kindred spirit who understands the profound physical and mental challenges of distance running. Murakami's reflections on how running has shaped his life might just provide the breakthrough you've been seeking. Let his insights empower you to keep showing up, keep pushing forward, and keep believing in yourself, no matter how difficult the path ahead may seem.

Dad, you've come so far already. You've embraced the challenges, and shown incredible strength and perseverance. I have no doubt that with your unwavering heart and iron will, you will cross that finish line stronger than ever before. Dad, I wish you the most fulfilling and transformative run of your life. Mom and I will be there cheering you on every step of the way.

With endless pride and love,

Peter

*Expressing your feelings about what the recipient(s) is/are experiencing*

*Explaining how the book may resonate with and inspire the recipient(s)*

*Offering encouragement and well-wishes for the recipient(s)*

# Sample 2

Dear Uncle Ben and Aunt May,

As you two embark on the grand adventure of retirement, I can't help but feel a profound sense of excitement and admiration. After years of dedicated service in the family business, you've more than earned this opportunity to explore the world unencumbered. The thought of you setting off on new journeys, immersing yourselves in diverse cultures, and creating memories that last a lifetime fills me with pure delight.

This is why I've chosen to gift you the classic Jules Verne novel, ***Around The World In Eighty Days***. This book is a timeless celebration of the joy of exploration, of discovering the unfamiliar, and of letting serendipity guide your path. The protagonist's famous words, "I see that it is by no means useless to travel, if a man wants to see something new," capture the very essence of what lies ahead for you. As you lose yourselves in Phileas Fogg's whirlwind race against the clock, I hope you'll be inspired to do the same – to throw caution to the wind, to savour every new sight, and to relish every new rhythm of life. But remember to take your time and don't do it fast and furious like Phileas.

May this book be the spark that ignites your wanderlust and emboldens you to embrace every adventure that comes your way. I wish you both the most wonderful retirement filled with infinite delights, unforgettable moments, and the freedom to follow your hearts wherever they may lead. Bon voyage, and don't forget to send postcards!

All my love,

Peter

*Expressing your feelings about what the recipient(s) is/are experiencing*

*Explaining how the book may resonate with and inspire the recipient(s)*

*Offering encouragement and well-wishes for the recipient(s)*



# 04 How to generate ideas for the book-gifting message?

## Sample 1

I know the last few months of training for your first marathon have been a rollercoaster ride. The long runs, the early mornings, the sweats and pains – it's not been easy. I know **there have been moments of frustration especially when you've hit that stubborn running plateau** and wondered if you could really push through. But through it all, I've been **in awe of your unwavering dedication and determination**. You haven't let anything stand in your way, and **the resilience you display inspires me every single day**.

## Sample 2

**As you two embark on the grand adventure of retirement**, I can't help but **feel a profound sense of excitement and admiration**. **After years of dedicated service in the family business, you've more than earned this opportunity to explore the world unencumbered**. The thought of you setting off on new journeys, immersing yourselves in diverse cultures, and creating memories that last a lifetime **fills me with pure delight**.

1

Expressing your feelings about what the recipient(s) is/are experiencing

- a. **What has happened to the recipient(s)?**
- b. **How do you feel?**

# 04 How to generate ideas for the book-gifting message?

## Sample 1

It reminds me of a line Haruki Murakami wrote in his book *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*: "In long-distance running the only opponent you have to beat is yourself, the way you used to be." Those words really resonate with me, and I think they may resonate with you too. As an avid runner himself, Murakami understands the journey you're on - the battle to surpass your own previous limitations and unlock your full potential.

I hope that in these pages, you'll find solace, wisdom, and a kindred spirit who understands the profound physical and mental challenges of distance running. Murakami's reflections on how running has shaped his life might just provide the breakthrough you've been seeking. Let his insights empower you to keep showing up, keep pushing forward, and keep believing in yourself, no matter how difficult the path ahead may seem.

## Sample 2

This is why I've chosen to gift you the classic Jules Verne novel, *Around The World In Eighty Days*. This book is a timeless celebration of the joy of exploration, of discovering the unfamiliar, and of letting serendipity guide your path. The protagonist's famous words, "I see that it is by no means useless to travel, if a man wants to see something new," capture the very essence of what lies ahead for you. As you lose yourselves in Phileas Fogg's whirlwind race against the clock, I hope you'll be inspired to do the same - to throw caution to the wind, to savour every new sight, and to relish every new rhythm of life. But remember to take your time and don't do it fast and furious like Phileas.

2

Explaining how the book may resonate with and inspire the recipient(s)

- a. What is the book about and what impact it may have on the recipient(s)?
- b. Which SOW from the book would leave a lasting impact on the recipient(s)?

# 04 How to generate ideas for the book-gifting message?

## Sample 1

Dad, you've come so far already. You've embraced the challenges, and shown incredible strength and perseverance. **I have no doubt that with your unwavering heart and iron will, you will cross that finish line stronger than ever before.** Dad, I wish you the most fulfilling and transformative run of your life. Mom and I will be there cheering you on every step of the way.

## Sample 2

**May this book be the spark that ignites your wanderlust and emboldens you to embrace every adventure that comes your way.** I wish you both the most wonderful retirement filled with infinite delights, unforgettable moments, and the freedom to follow your hearts wherever they may lead. Bon voyage, and don't forget to send postcards!

3

Offering encouragement and well-wishes for the recipient(s)

- a. **What words of encouragement do you have for the recipient(s)?**
- b. **What wishes do/does the recipient(s) need most at the moment?**

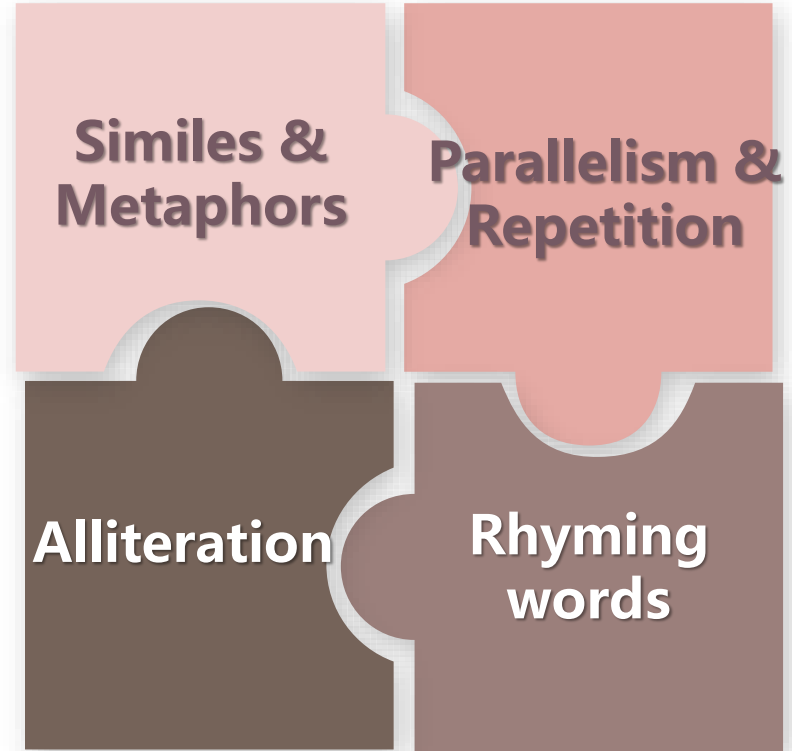
## 05 How to polish your language to enhance your message?

### Creative use of English

enhances the emotional appeal of your message and helps highlight the key features of your book to create an impact. Let's sprinkle a dash of creativity and spice up your writing with the use of literary devices.

*For more tips on the use of literary devices, please watch the following video:*

[https://emm.edcity.hk/media/1\\_w6oicivb](https://emm.edcity.hk/media/1_w6oicivb)



# Similes

- 🔥 comparing one thing to another explicitly using “like” or “as”

## Effects



- 🔥 visualising abstract ideas
- 🔥 creating more vivid descriptions

<b>Recipient:</b>	A newly-arrived NCS student who wants to know more about Hong Kong and Chinese culture
<b>Book:</b>	<b><i>All About China: Stories, Songs, Crafts and Games for Kids</i></b> by Allison Branscombe
<b>Example:</b>	<b><i>The book is like a time machine that takes you to travel across different time periods from ancient to modern times to explore the history, customs and rich cultural traditions of China, allowing you to immerse yourself in the wonders of Chinese culture.</i></b>

<b>Recipient:</b>	My cousin, who suffers from Internet addiction
<b>Book:</b>	<b>Atomic Habits</b> by James Clear
<b>Example:</b>	<i>You may feel that <b>the cyberspace is as irresistible and bottomless as a black hole</b>, constantly pulling you in with alluring distractions and content, but this book assures us that quitting any bad habits, including Internet addiction, is not as difficult as you think. All you need is to follow the steps in the book to develop practical strategies to form good habits and break bad ones.</i>

# Metaphors



equating two things based on common/shared features, using “to be” or direct substitution

Recipient:	My class teacher, who has been teaching my class for three years and is about to see us graduate
Book:	<b><i>Lessons Learned and Cherished: The Teacher Who Changed My Life</i></b> by Deborah Roberts
Example:	<i>May I present this book to you as a heartfelt tribute and token of thanks, hoping that it will serve as a lasting reminder of the <u>seeds of wisdom</u> you have sowed in our minds. <u>Your class is the fertile ground</u> from which our minds have blossomed and <u>your words of encouragement are the nurturing rain</u> that nourishes our hearts and helps us grow.</i>

## Effects



- visualising abstract ideas
- creating more vivid descriptions

Recipient:	My best friend, who struggles with studies and lacks confidence
Book:	<b><i>Fish in a Tree</i></b> by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
Example:	<i>I hope the book can awaken <u>the genie within you</u>, empowering you to discover your unique talents, unlock your hidden potential and embrace your boundless possibilities.</i>

# Parallelism & Repetition

- 🍷 parallelism – repeated use of phrasal units and sentence patterns
- 🍷 repetition – repeated use of the same words
- 🍷 often used with the rule of three for emphasis

## Effects



- 🍷 enhancing rhythm
- 🍷 creating a sense of pattern and cohesion
- 🍷 adding emphasis to reinforce the message

<b>Recipient:</b>	My best friend, who struggles with studies and lacks confidence
<b>Book:</b>	<i>Fish in a Tree</i> by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
<b>Example:</b>	<i>I hope the book can awaken the genie within you, empowering you to <b>discover your unique talents, unlock your hidden potential and embrace your boundless possibilities.</b></i>

<b>Recipient:</b>	My sister, who has been selected for an international exchange programme and will take part in the Youth Leadership Summit to meet young leaders from different countries
<b>Book:</b>	<i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i> by Dale Carnegie
<b>Example:</b>	<i>This timeless guide can enlighten you on <b>how to</b> make new friends, <b>how to</b> increase your influence, and <b>how to</b> create deeper connections, which can surely transform <b>your</b> relationships, <b>your</b> career and <b>your</b> life.</i>

# Alliteration

🎁 repeated use of initial consonant sounds in nearby words

<b>Recipient:</b>	A newly-arrived NCS student who wants to know more about Hong Kong and Chinese culture
<b>Book:</b>	<i>All About China: Stories, Songs, Crafts and Games for Kids</i> by Allison Branscombe
<b>Example:</b>	<i>The book opens the door to a <u>c</u>ultural <u>c</u>ornucopia and a <u>w</u>orld of <u>w</u>onders</i>

## Effects



- 🎁 enhancing rhythm
- 🎁 creating more catchy and memorable lines and phrases

<b>Recipient:</b>	My father, who has been practising for marathon and wants to break through a running plateau
<b>Book:</b>	<i>What I Talk About When I Talk About Running</i> by Haruki Murakami
<b>Example:</b>	<i>I hope Murakami's <u>c</u>aptivating <u>c</u>hronicle of his running experience can kindle your <u>l</u>ifelong <u>l</u>ove for running and support you on your <u>w</u>inding <u>w</u>ellness journey.</i>



# Rhyming words

- 🎁 using words with similar ending sounds

## Effects



- 🎁 enhancing rhythm and musicality
- 🎁 making the lines more refined and poetic

<b>Recipients:</b>	My uncle and aunt, who will soon kick off their retirement by travelling around the world by themselves
<b>Book:</b>	<i><b>Around the World in Eighty Days</b></i> by Jules Vern
<b>Example:</b>	<i>After retirement, you'll see even <b>more</b>, as the world is yours to <b>explore</b>. May Vern's classic guides you to <b>roam</b>, and brings unexpected prizes <b>home</b>.</i>

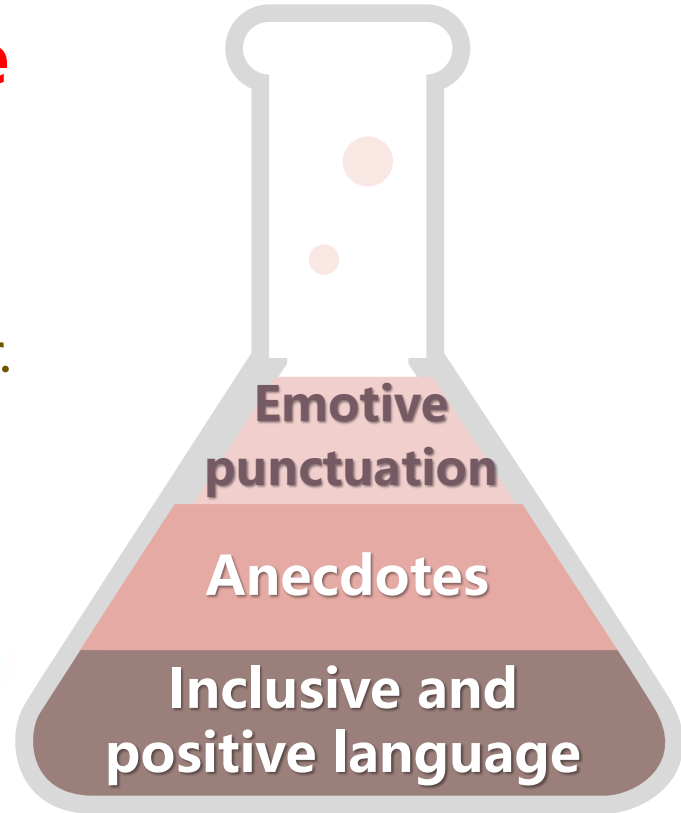
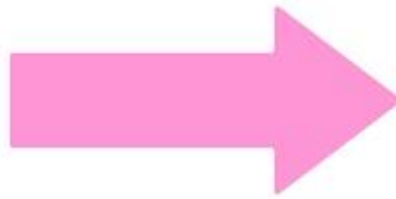
<b>Recipient:</b>	My class teacher, who has been teaching my class for three years and is about to see us graduate
<b>Book:</b>	<i><b>Lessons Learned and Cherished: The Teacher Who Changed My Life</b></i> by Deborah Roberts
<b>Example:</b>	<i>As I flip through the book <b>pages</b>, I recall your guidance at different learning <b>stages</b>. Your teaching is a gift I will always <b>treasure</b>. Your inspiration and influence are beyond <b>measure</b>.</i>

## 05 How to polish your language to enhance your message?

### **A personal and affectionate tone**

helps build connection and **evoke emotional resonance** with the recipient(s). Let's pour some **potions of endearment** into your message to make it feel warmer and sweeter.

Here is the fizzing formula of the magic potion for a personal and affectionate tone.

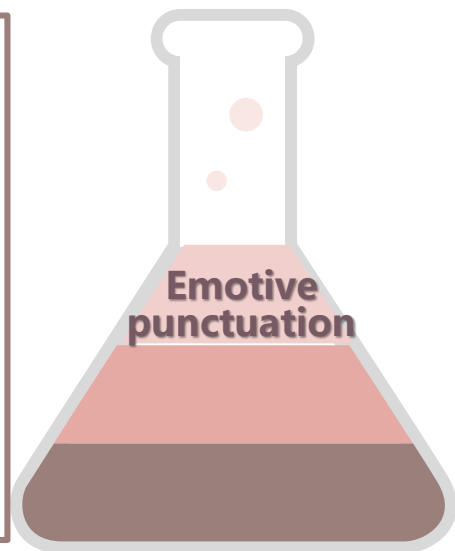


# 05 How to polish your language to enhance your message?

Hey Battle Buddy,

I hope you're doing well! I've been thinking about you a lot lately, and I wanted to reach out because I care about you and your well-being. I know how easy it is to get caught up on the Internet (especially those online role-playing games you never won without teaming up with me!!) — it can really take away the things that truly matter.

Remember all those fun times we had playing outside, food-crawling, and just being silly together? I miss those moments **A LOT!!** I believe we can create even more amazing memories if we step back from our screens a bit.



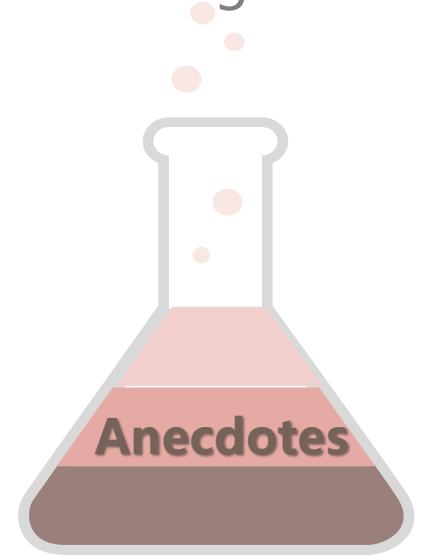
Emotive punctuation	Effect
<b>Parenthesis ( )</b>	To add a side comment or a personal note
<b>Dash –</b>	To create a pause and emphasise a thought
<b>CAPITALISATION</b>	To convey strong feelings

# 05 How to polish your language to enhance your message?

Hey **Battle Buddy**,

I hope you're doing well! I've been thinking about you a lot lately, and I wanted to reach out because I care about you and your well-being. I know how easy it is to get caught up on the Internet (**especially those online role-playing games you never won without teaming up with me!!**)—it can really take away the things that truly matter.

Remember all those fun times we had **playing outside, food-crawling, and just being silly together**? I miss those moments A LOT!! I believe we can create even more amazing memories if we step back from our screens a bit.



e.g. funny incidents,  
inside jokes, shared  
memories ...

## 05 How to polish your language to enhance your message?

**How about we** plan some time to hang out, **just the two of us**? We could go for a hike, watch a movie, or even just grab some snacks and talk about everything and anything. I think it could be a great way to **reconnect** and enjoy life outside the digital world.

Also, I wanted to recommend a fantastic book called *Atomic Habits* by James Clear. It offers some great insights on building good habits and breaking free from the ones that hold us back. I think it could really help you as you try to find a better balance with tech.

You're such a wonderful person, and I know you have so much to offer beyond the screen. **Let's inspire each other** to live fully in the moment! What do you think? I'm excited to hear your ideas!

Take care,  
Billy



i.e. words that  
show togetherness

## 05 How to polish your language to enhance your message?

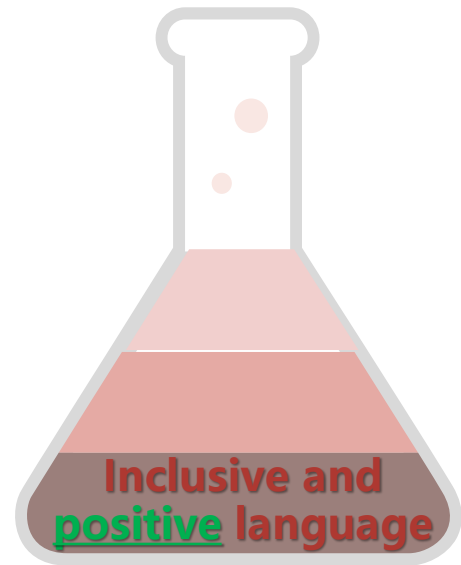
How about we plan some time to hang out, just the two of us? We could go for a hike, watch a movie, or even just grab some snacks and talk about everything and anything. I think it could be a great way to reconnect and enjoy life outside the digital world.

Also, I wanted to recommend a fantastic book called Atomic Habits by James Clear. It offers some great insights on building good habits and breaking free from the ones that hold us back. I think it could really help you as you try to find a better balance with tech.

You're such **a wonderful person**, and I know **you have so much to offer** beyond the screen. Let's inspire each other to live fully in the moment! What do you think? **I'm excited** to hear your ideas!

Take care,

Billy



i.e. words that show encouragement, acknowledgement and hope

# 06 What to pay attention to when designing a 2D artwork

The 2D artwork should reflect:

## Thematic alignment

Ensure that the design aligns with the message and the theme of the book you are gifting.



## Personalisation

Incorporate a personal message, a shared moment, or a symbolic object or a special reference that makes the artwork feel personal and tailored for the recipient(s).



## Aesthetics

Consider the personal style and preferences of the recipient(s) when selecting the colours, fonts and overall visual style.

## 06 What to pay attention to when designing a 2D artwork



The maximum size of the 2D artwork is A4 and only still images are allowed.



Three-dimensional (3D) graphics or animations are not accepted. The visual representations can be:

- ❖ hand-drawn (in any form, such as poster colour, water colour, crayon, oil pastel and ink);
- ❖ digitalised (photos or still images of computer graphics); or
- ❖ a collage or mosaic with an assemblage of various art forms.





## 06 What to pay attention to when designing a 2D artwork



The artwork must be original. No copyrighted or patented materials are allowed.



While participants are strictly prohibited from using AI tools in writing the book-gifting message, they are allowed to use AI tools in the creation and/or editing of the artwork.



# Reminders



**Deadline for submission**

6:00 p.m., 31 March 2025 (Monday)

**Requirements**

Each entry should include:

- a book-gifting message with a SOW taken from the book that leaves a lasting impact on the recipient(s) and echoes the overarching theme and/or four sub-themes; and
- a piece of 2D artwork that represents and enhances the message to be delivered to the recipient(s).

**For more information about the Competition, please refer to the competition webpage:**

<https://www.edb.gov.hk/BookGifting>



# A checklist for your submission



## Content

- Opening: Express your feelings about what the recipient(s) is/are experiencing
  - situation facing the recipient(s)
  - your feelings
- Body: Explain how the book will resonate with and inspire the recipient(s)
  - introduction about the book and its inspiration to the recipient(s)
  - a SOW from the book that would leave a lasting impact on the recipient(s)
- Ending: Offer encouragement and well-wishes for the recipient(s)
  - words of encouragement for the recipient(s)
  - well-wishes for the recipient(s)

## Language

- Write with a personal and affectionate tone to build connection and evoke emotional resonance with the recipient(s)
  - emotive punctuation
  - anecdotes
  - inclusive and positive language
- Include the creative use of English to enhance the emotional appeal of the message:
  - similes and metaphors
  - parallelism and repetition
  - alliteration
  - rhyming words

## Visual aids

- Include a piece of 2D artwork that reflects:
  - personalisation
  - thematic alignment
  - aesthetics