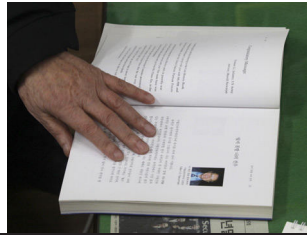


Word of the day

Sabbatical (noun): An extended absence in the career of an individual in order to achieve something
Used in a sentence: Our English teacher is on *sabbatical* to finish writing her book.
Suggested by: Satwikaa
Your turn! Pick a word from today's *The Hindu in School* whose meaning you do not know and send it to us at school@thehindu.co.in (Subject: Word of the day)



The contest countdown

One of the storytellers behind the scenes gives you a glimpse into what went into the making of the contest...

Karishma Mahubani

2 months to deadline

"Who will handle the Classroom of the Year contest?" Naresh, the CEO of the Book Lovers' Program asked. He was looking at me.
 "Me?" I squeaked, frantically thinking of my many duties and about the juggling act that this new responsibility would entail. The annual contest was no minor undertaking. A group of students from each class was to put together a magazine. Making the guidelines was not a problem but I foresaw the daunting prospect of answering a million queries.
 "It won't take much of your time," he proclaimed. "Put processes in place, streamline it. No sweat, easy peasy," he assured me.

6 weeks to the deadline

I received my first phone call from a participant. I asked her about her school, answered her doubts about the talent corner, discussed her ideas for a story and at the end of the call realised we had been chatting for nearly 15 minutes. It was such a pleasure talking

to students. All I had to do was sit back and let the processes in place do their magic. No sweat!

2 weeks to deadline

Then came the questions. They started innocently. "What is the meaning of 'setting of the story'?" "Could you ask my Principal to grant me permission to take pictures on campus?" "May I include a quiz?" "Should I write it by hand?" I answered all their queries patiently, though I had to bite my tongue sometimes.

One persistent kid who knew where I lived rang my door bell at 7 in the evening with his magazine in hand. He wanted my feedback. His face fell when I explained that would be unethical. I was about to close the door when he asked me: "Could you tell me the meaning of 'unethical'?"

1 week to deadline

I had started receiving emails by the dozen! The email id created for the contest ran out of memory due to the sheer volume of communication from participants. One tearful email was from a team

whose leader had had a personal tragedy and was unable to participate. They had completed most of the magazine and asked if they could make an alteration at this late stage. I answered this and many more email queries and moved on to sending the information about the contest to newly registered participants. This was a very time consuming process. Sometimes, I'd have to respond to emails so fast that my computer stopped working as if in protest!

48 hours to deadline

Tring Tring...
 Was that my alarm? It was still dark outside. Who could be calling at this ungodly hour?
 "Ma'am, am I speaking to *The Hindu*?" a high pitched voice asked.
 "You're speaking to Karishma. Go on."
 I croaked, pulling my blanket over my head and snuggling deeper into my bed. The idea that people don't usually start work before dawn is clearly lost on some people!
 "Ma'am what address should I send my Classroom of the Year magazine

to?" This was not the first call asking for the address.
 "Have you read the e-mail I sent; it was titled Rules and FAQs?" I asked tersely.
 "Yes."
 "Did you scroll down and read the line, 'Read the attached document carefully'?"

"I did not read it ma'am."
 "The address is available in that document," I said exasperated.
 I had been besieged by calls about the contest. Doubts had come pouring in. Why didn't I put my phone on silent mode, you ask? The answer to that question lay sleeping next to me. Annoyed by the constant ringing, my son had thrown my smartphone at my laptop and both devices were currently in intensive care. I was reduced to using an outdated flip-phone that belonged in a museum. The volume control was, well, out of order.
 The phone rang insistently during my storytelling sessions, during office meetings, during my shower; kids

from all over the country had queries and doubts about the word count, page numbers, binding options, mode of delivery, criteria for judging and pleas for extension of the deadline. My loving husband of five years was thoroughly enjoying the state of affairs.

According to him, I was a walking-talking call centre for kids. He wasn't far off the mark. One evening, I picked up the phone and said instinctively, "Hello! Thank you for calling about Classroom of the year 2013. How may I help you?"
 "Beta, is that you?" My grandmother asked.

24 hours to deadline

I got to office and asked immediately, "Where are all the contest entries?"
 "Nothing new today," S called out from across the room.
 This was a disaster! Less than 10 per cent of the 700 registered teams had actually sent in their entries! Had all the blood, sweat and tears over the past two months been for naught?

12 hours before deadline

The magazine entries began flooding the office with a staggering

momentum; in no time, there were entries from places in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Delhi and many other states.

There was constant activity at our front door; after a point, we didn't bother closing it at all. Personnel from the courier service and the post office brought dozens of parcels at a time. Many entries were even delivered in person by fond mothers, fathers, grandparents, drivers and teachers of the participants. Sometimes even the children themselves.

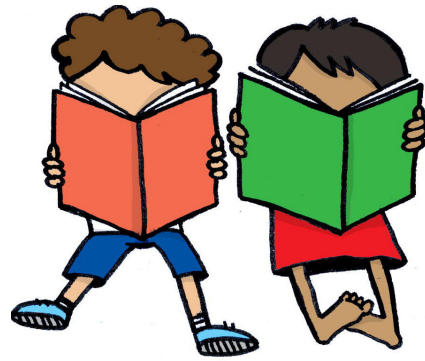
Massive cardboard cartons that were used for the purpose of state wise segregation were bursting at the seams.

I busied myself cross-referencing each entry that arrived with the ones on my excel sheet. The parcels had arrived just in time. The effort of thousands of children would not be in vain. Their hard work would be appraised.

My office was buried in an avalanche of brown, beige and white parcels. As the deadline passed, I surveyed the mountains of entries and smiled mentally - I'd done it. And it was over!

And the Classroom of the Year 2013 is...

Thank you for taking part in the Contest of the Year 2013 - 2014. We received 511 magazine entries and were overwhelmed by your response. We appreciate the hard work and effort put in by all the students and teachers. A panel of professionals, including teachers, journalists, authors and story-tellers, have judged the entries. Points were given for originality, clean presentation, language style and fluency. Short stories that were copied off the internet were disqualified. The decision of the judges is final. The entries were geographically divided based on the volume of entries and winners were selected from each zone. Go through the list below to see if your team is a winner. Here are the results of the Classroom of the Year 2013 - 2014.



ZONE 1: CHENNAI

Winner
Team name/ Magazine name: MBA
Classroom: VII E, PSBB K K Nagar, Chennai.
Team members: B.Anjan, V.Bharathi, J.Vijayshree, B.Abinaya, Meenakshi Ayyappan.
Teacher: Vimala Jeevanandhan
Special Mentions:
 Team Impulse, PS Sr. Sec School, Chennai (E. Asmitha; Elakiya; Gowtham; Karthik Raja Anjana Kannan)
 Team Pied Pipers, Velammal Matric. Hr. Sec. School, Panchetti (Gayathri; Harish. N; Prarthana. J; Shivani. K; Harinivash; Teacher: Ms. Mercy. J)
 Team Five Senses, PSBB Millennium School, Chennai. (Vijetha Ravishreya Sarathy; Gautham B.P; Varun Narendra; Yamuna.A; Teacher: Malini.S)
 Team Spectacular Sparkies, PSBB KK Nagar, Chennai (Nakkeeran V R; M Palani; G Suriya; Keerthana K; Mirra Rajalakshmi M; Teacher: Mrs.Padmashree Ramesh)
 Team Students' Voice, BVM Global, Chennai (S. Aparna; Sri Sowmya; Meenakshi Mownica; Srividhya; Gayathri; Teacher: Poornima)
 Team Creative 5, Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Chennai, (Ananya Soni; Nandini T Mehta; Krithika Jaikumari; Krithik P; Dhinesh Kumar. Teacher: Padmini Rao)

ZONE 2: TRICHY

Winner
Team name/ Magazine name: Glittering Girls
Classroom: Vignesh Vidyalaya, CBSE
Team members: G S Sruthi, G Srinidhi, R Nivetha, M R Sri Harini, Nithiaashree S
Teacher: Yamuna Vasudevan
Special Mentions
 Team Visionaries Of Tomorrow, Sacred Heart School, Pudukkottai (M K Jaiganesh, S Vignesh, M Karthik, J Devanesan, K Pradeep; Teacher: Mrs. S Geevitha)
 Team Caruncle Heap, Montfort School, Kattur, Trichy (S Amalia, S Charupriya, T Thirumozhi, P Miracleene, C Shirley Williams; Teacher: Mrs. Sweetlin Jeba Priya)
 Team Storm Hawks, Kamala Niketan Montessori School (S.Mohammed Rishwan, J.Syed Basheer, B.Kruthika, S.Sri Savithri, K.Sanjay Kumar; Teacher: Mr.Ravichandran)
 Team Dream Predators, R S K Higher Secondary School, BHEL Township,

Trichy (Viyashini S, Sangavi M, Shabareesh K, Srinidhi S, Ugesuraraan P; Teachers: Mrs. Sudha Ragunathan)

ZONE 3: MADURAI

Winner
Team name/ Magazine name: The Famous Five
Classroom: Mahatma Montessori Mat. Hr Sec school, KK Nagar, Madurai
Team members: Yuthika, Ilakkiya, Ayesha, Yogashree, Shruti;
Special Mentions
 Team Auric Aurare, S.B.O.A. MHSS, Madurai (B.Lennin Kumar, J.Jerusha Carline, R.S.Thathathrey, J.Janani; Teacher: Mrs.D.Jacinth Darling Flora)
 Team Brain Breezers, St. Michael Matric. Hr.Sec.School, Madurai (K. Jena Vignesh, R Edward, Meeka Merin Jacob, M.V Nitheesh Kumar, S Dharun; Teacher Ms.Pearline & Selva Kumari)
 Team Glimpses Of Mahatma, Mahatma Montessori School CBSE, Madurai (M Prasanna Kumar, N.p Monica Ramaraj, M.P Mano Dharshan, M.Adhitya sivaraman, S.K.Suruthi Seema; Teacher Mrs M Kanniya)
 Team Rumination, Class 8A, C.S.Ramachary Memorial Mat.Hr.Sec.School, Madurai (Teacher: Kavitha M.)
 Team Sparkling Diamonds, Mahatma Montessori School CBSE, Madurai (Harsha Vardhini.B, Akshitha.V.A, Subhalakshmi.C, Malya.J.G; Teacher Mrs Deepa)

ZONE 4: COIMBATORE

Winner
Team name/ Magazine name: Pink Petals
Classroom: Bharathi Vidhyalaya Matric Higher Secondary School, Erode
Team members: Swetha.B, Anukeerthana.S, Sree Deeksha.L.R, Rithivika.M.D
Teacher: Deborah Ann Fernando
Special mentions
 Team Buddies, Class VIII B, BVM Global@ Karpagam Campus (Sreya.T.N, Sri Srinidhi.S, Thrisha.K, Varsha Ramachandran; Ms. Balakirthika)
 Team from The PSBB Millennium Schoc (K.Mekavi, B.Snegha, B.Sarnitha, K.A.Poonkuzalali; Teachers: Padma)

ZONE 5: TIRUNELVELI

Winner:
Team name/ Magazine name: AJNA
Classroom: PBIS, Tirunelveli
Team members: Afesha, Aashrithi, Divina, Kanthinrathi, Kaviraj
Special Mention:
 Team Victorious Secrets, PVM CBSE, Tirunelveli (Roshni S., Prem Varsha P., Srisithijha S., Shanmathi S., Jeya Arthi, Teacher: Ms. Chitra Kala)
 Team Creative Express, PVM CBSE, Tirunelveli (R. Jeya Gomathi Mirra, R. Maharasi, D. Nithish, T.R. Rengadeva, M Amrith Ram; Teacher: Ms Bindhu)



School, Thanjavur (Tharuna Sri M, Dhakshayani R, Sneha K, Arul Jeni A, Pooja Arumugam; Teacher: Parimala.S)
 Team from Holy Cross Anglo-Indian School, Tuticorin (Melba Violet, Jude Rishaly, J. Japhina, Febya Rayen, M. Mafrinodo, Teacher: Ms Sharmila)
 Team Holy Cross, Holy Cross Anglo-Indian School, Tuticorin (B. Asmitha, R. Nithya, Anita G., M. Akshaya, A. Ahmed; Teacher: Ms Sharmila)
 Team Stunning Shockers, The Ashok Leyland School, Hosur (Amoolya.K, Bala Pradyumna.R, Priyanka.S, Sharumathi.S; Teachers:Venkatachala Reddy.G)

ZONE 7: KERALA

Winner
Team name/ Magazine name: En Route
Classroom: Believers' Church Residential School, Thiruvalla
Team members: Indu V Gopan, Nithya M Kurien, Aliva M Sherief, Ria Susan, Susan Ann Jacob
Teacher: Sajini Matthew
Special Mentions:
 Team Cibola, Vidyodaya School, Kochi (Aavani, Alicia, Irene, Madhav, Mathew; Teacher: Mrs. Usha S)
 Team Zumi, KV Kanjikode, Palakkad (Nithya N V, Anagha Sivadas, Nirupam V, Athira R, K Praanesh; Teacher: Mrs. Rugmini Menon)
 Team Zingini, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Poochatty, Thissur (Harigovind, Vivek Viswanath, Chaujal K S, Michelle George, Sandra Shajan; Teacher: Mrs. Smitha Rohit)
 Team Speculum, Rajagiri Christu Jayanti Public School, Kochi (Farhan Saddiq, Jeeson Eldo, Mohammed Hishan, Mohammed Roshan Wisham, Venkitesh C Bose; Teacher: Mrs. Anshu George)
 Team Insight, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Kollam (Akhil Sanil, Joby Alexander, Siyo P Saji, Manjima M R, Sreelakshmi R Pillai; Teacher: Mrs. Jyothi V G)

ZONES 8: REST OF INDIA

Winner
Team name/ Magazine name: Pulse
Classroom: AMS P Obul Reddy Public School, Hyderabad
Team members: Darsh Golechha, Mustafa Chass, Pratima Jandhyala, Pallavi Cham, Aastha Maskara
Teacher: Sreekala Madhavan
Special Mentions
 Team Crackpot, Andhra Mahila Sabha P Obul Reddy Public School, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad (Ajita Kandula, Anchal Rana, Ajoy Sinha, Shravya Dharmapuri, Anirudh Potlappally; Teacher: Mrs. Roja Rajni Gedam)
 Team Kennedy Blossoms, Kennedy High The Global School, Hyderabad (Partha Sarathi, Sravani Reddy, Aastha Mittal, Yoga Bharagna, Rachana Badhita; Teacher: Mrs. S.V.Lakshmi)
 Team Power Punch, ONGC Public School, Karaikal (Divyaa R, Jazlyn C, Pavithra S, Shivani S, Shiva Priya S; Teacher: Mrs. Rose Mary Therese)
 Team Wongbets, Presidency School, Bangalore (Sucheta Ghosh, Sharon A P, Keertan Charmarti, Ravi Chetan, Rajat Raghuram; Teacher: Ms. Geeta Kathait)
 Team Silverstar, Madhava Kripa School, Manipal (Laxmi L Kini, Vaishali, Shamitha, Fathima, Elvia; Teacher: Mrs. Shakilakshi)
 Team Brilliant Minds, Ratnam High School, Tirupathi (K Sree Laya; V Sushma; B Sai Pavan; C Revanth; N Hima Vaishnavi; Teacher: Mrs. Manjula)
 Team Students' Journalier, DPS, Khajaguda, Hyderabad (Aditi Kodipady, Neharika Jali, Prathibha Bharadwaj, Sanjana Waghray, Tanmay Joshi; Teacher: Mrs. Sarala Ratish)
 Team Dipsites Diary, DPS, Vishakapatnam (Ankit Biswas, Ashuman Panda, Ayaz Sarwar, Pratik Uthan, Rishi Suman; Teacher: Mr. J J Edwin)
 Team Bhavan's Magic, BVB Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad (Anantha Krishna C, Ananya Patnaik, Muskan R Dharod, Sai Aishwarya, Kaushik Arcot; Teacher: Mrs. Sanchita Sharma)



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 Call +918122074418
 Email naresh.blps@gmail.com
 www.blps.in

What have they won?

- Congratulations to all the winners!
- Prizes for winners:**
 - * A workshop on writing (conducted by storytellers, journalists and writers)
 - * A set of exciting storybooks
 - * Certificates
 - * A visit to The Hindu office.
 - Prize for the special mentions:**
 - * A one day workshop.
- Please be patient we will get in touch with you via email.**
 Look out for more exciting contests next year.

Signing off,
 COTY team

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