

Back to school



THE summer vacation is coming to an end. A new school year is approaching. We can see both teachers and students getting ready to meet each other once more.

Yes, after a nice long vacation of relaxation and fun we are back to school again.

To find out more about how students are preparing themselves for this event, I visited some shopping centers. I spoke to some of the students. I found out that almost all of them are happy their schools are reopening. They expressed their happiness and joy about returning to school because they miss their friends, teachers and the school environment. Although, some of them were not excited about getting back

to the pressure of studying, exams and early to bed routine, they still had smiles on their faces. This was because they were shopping and buying new things for school.

On the other hand, this event of getting ready to go back to school could be hard on our parents' pockets. Many of the students tend to buy all new stuff; new bag, shoes, dresses, dishdashas, pens, etc. even though the old ones are still in very good shape. I asked some of the students in the shopping centers why do they buy new stuff each year? Most of them said, "We don't want our friends to laugh at us, we want to look special, we have enough money and so on. Allah said in his Holy Quran: "O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by

wearing your clean clothes), while praying and going round (the Tawaf of) the Kabah, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not Al Musrifun (those who waste by extravagance). (al-araf,31)

The above Aya explains to us that we need to think well before we spend our money on things that are not necessary and before we put pressure on our parent's budgets.

Dear friends, we need to balance things and always think of other children who cannot afford to buy anything. The holy month of Ramadan is the right time for all of us to be generous and caring. If you have extra things you do not need, look for others who might be in real need. If your old stuff is still good, continue using it. Do something else with the money. It can come in use for the ones in need.

Back to school is an event that we celebrate each year. It is an event we will always enjoy.

Last but not least, I'd just like to say to my dear friends; try to have as much fun as you can, while you are still at school. School days are days that will never return and will never be forgotten. However, while you are having fun do not forget your studies, because your future depends on good grades.

Your friend,

— **Shaima Ahmed Al Hosni**
Grade 9

Assila bint Qais School, Muscat



THE DAY OMAN WON

I wait and wait
For the winning date.
We won the cup.
Oman is the top.
Our hero team
Achieved the dream.
How happy we are
To have the red star.

— **Hamed Ahmed Al Badri**
Grade 6, Al Kamel School
Batinah North

The day Oman won
The players are number one
It was seriously fun
And then it was all gone
Finished and done
For a moment I looked at the sun
And then I started to run
I told everyone to come
They shouted
This is the day Oman won

— **Shurooq Salem Al Zawawi**
Grade 7,
Al Sahwa School, Muscat

The players were wearing red
I was wearing red
Everybody was everywhere
It was nice there
It was fun and sad
I was there and it was hard
I closed my eyes
Then noises were coming to my ears
The omani players were holding the cup
The omani team is the top
IT'S THE DAY OMAN WON!!!

— **Nujood Waleed Al Hashar**
Grade 7, Green,
Al Sahwa School
Muscat

What's in the issue



Mabrook!



International Day for Illiteracy



The Scary Camel



If you are worried about something, share it with yO's agony aunt, Khala Zaitoona — she'll help you with your problem
youth_observer@moe.om

Welcome to new school year

Address by His Excellency Yahya bin Saud al Sulaimi, Minister of Education. Marking the beginning of the 2009/2010 school year

Praise be to Allah, and blessing and peace be upon the best of mankind, our Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, his family, Companions and followers till the Day of Judgement.

Brothers and sisters, members of teaching faculty

Dear students
Dear parents,

Peace and mercy of Allah be upon you

AS we welcome a new school year, I am pleased to extend my sincere best regards to our students, their parents, and all employees of the Ministry of Education in their various positions and responsibilities, especially teachers.

I am also pleased, as we welcome this new school year with hearts full of optimism and hope, to welcome teachers who have joined us this year to participate in the process of building generations and urge them and those who preceded them in performing this noble educational mission to make more strenuous efforts, and continue their hard work so that their efforts achieve success and meaningful outcomes.

I would also like to congratulate General Education Diploma students who suc-



will join grade one with their peers in their quest to acquire knowledge — asking Allah Almighty to grant success to their educational journey.

Dear Brothers and Sisters

As the new school year begins, the Ministry has taken all the necessary preparations to ensure its success. Schools have been supplied with all the requirements for the teaching and learning process, textbooks will be in place from the beginning, and qualified teaching and administration staff has been provided, with the number of those appointed this year reaching around five thousand in various disciplines of education. It should be pointed out that along with the enrolment of these large numbers of staff, the current school year has also witnessed the introduction of new types of educational posts, whose existence has become an essential requirement in many of our schools.

cessfully completed the last school year, to encourage them to continue the same approach of hard work, determination and perseverance in their educational and career journey of life, and wish them a bright future, God willing. At the same time, I welcome our young sons and daughters who

❖ *Continued on page 2*

We owe our gratitude to Oman Shipping Company and Petroleum Development Oman



عمان موبايل
oman mobile

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts

Welcome to new school year

◆ *Continued from page 1*

Among these are the posts of school activities specialist, school database specialist and other such administrative posts, which aim primarily to provide educational services to our students with a more specialised and scientific methodology.

The introduction of the Research Methodology subject in the grades 11 and 12 curriculum, which was initiated at the beginning of the 2007/2008 academic year, has seen significant positive results. Our students were able to produce a range of outstanding projects which were well received and commended by the specialists. The Ministry has forward many of these to relevant authorities and institutions to consider the possibility of utilising and developing them.

It is hoped that new roles such as these will help to turn schools into independent educational institutions operating beyond their traditional concept. It is further hoped that this will in turn help schools to reach higher goals and to produce a quality education which caters for a variety of student talents and capabilities.

Dear Brothers and Sisters

As you know, the world is currently going through a spread of an influenza disease caused by virus H1N1. Taking into account the safety of our students, and for the interest of their health, the directives of His Majesty the Sultan postponed the beginning of the school year for our students from 29 August, 2009 to 26 September, 2009. The aim was to provide optimum health and to make schools better prepared to receive our students, and to provide time to complete the training for teaching and supervisory staff in schools in aspects of both awareness and treatment.

In this regard, I implore our students to avoid the causes of the disease through their care of personal hygiene, and not to hesitate to visit health centres if they feel any symptoms. I also call on parents to cooperate with the teaching faculty in schools who have recently received specialised training, to support the efforts of all state institutions and to pay more attention to educating their children on the importance of personal hygiene and other procedures.

Dear brothers and sisters

The development of the education

A well qualified and efficient education cadre is a cornerstone in the development process, so we regard this educational cadre as a partner with the Ministry in all its development plans and educational programmes

system and upgrading its components is an essential requirement if we are to keep pace with rapid scientific progress in all areas of life. A well qualified and efficient education cadre is a cornerstone in the development process, so we regard this educational cadre as a partner with the Ministry in all its development plans and educational programmes. This cadre should support this partnership through the practical implementation of these programmes and adopting good practice plans in the classroom, school and educational environment as a whole. Such action will ensure that educational performance is consistent with the educational objectives.

The commitment of teachers to the set school plans, their efforts to continue to develop their skills, to mutually cooperate with their supervisors to improve the implementation of the study plan and to exchange experiences are all attributes that we hope teaching faculty members, both new and established, will keep in mind. Not only will this strengthen their skills but it will contribute to the continuous development of our education system.

Therefore we call upon teachers to practice good teaching planning and to apply the set teaching plans to ensure the successful delivery of the curriculum. We hope they will spare no effort in achieving self-development and in carrying out their duties in a professional manner. Teaching is a dynamic interactive process that will only produce the desired results when practitioners believe in the importance of what they are doing.

There is nothing more important than developing young minds in a positive way that implants in their hearts the love for learning where the quest for knowledge becomes a passion. We also call on teachers to take into account individual differences between students and to deal with each student as an independent entity based on their abilities, inter-

ests and aspirations.

A good relationship between the student and the teacher is an essential prerequisite for the success of the educational process. Sympathetic treatment of students, through respect for their opinions and understanding of their age and psychological needs, all contribute to creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust between the two parties and this, in turn, leads to a conducive climate for effective learning and the creation of outstanding students.

Here, we call on parents to collaborate with the school and teaching staff and to support teachers in their efforts to correct improper behaviour and to encourage appropriate student growth. While families have the main responsibility for the upbringing of their children, we believe that teachers have an important supportive role to play.

We hope teachers do their best to achieve this end and contribute actively and responsibly in creating a teaching and learning environment that instils values and principles of good citizenship among students, develops a spirit of brotherhood and cooperation, and makes them aware of community issues and services and environmental affairs and preservation.

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Oman is currently preparing for the implementation of the General Census for Population, Housing and Establishments to be implemented in April 2010. It is a national project which has great importance in the preparation of various future national plans including the plans for educational growth in the Sultanate. This General Census will provide data on the demographic distribution of Omani society and this will be of great assistance in developing our educational plans and programmes.

Given this great interest in the census, both for the education sector and

the other state service sectors, I call upon parents to cooperate with the enumerators in providing the data that will enable the state service sectors to build their future development plans in order to further develop Omani citizens.

I am also pleased as we begin a new school year to call upon students and school faculty, administrative and supervisory members to promote awareness of the importance of the census through various educational activities and to provide all facilities and full cooperation for the success of the census. I am confident that directorates, departments and schools in all provinces and regions in the Sultanate will spare no effort in giving attention to the census and promoting awareness of its importance through their various programmes.

Dear students

Time management in studying and doing homework are keys to high achievement. I therefore call on our students to manage their time and develop their learning abilities from the start of the school year, and invite them to make use of their school's facilities such as learning resource centres, science laboratories and computers, and acquire different forms of self-learning in order to raise their academic achievement levels. I also call on parents to communicate with the school in order to follow-up their children's performance.

Students are encouraged to be more focused on their studies when they are aware that their family is concerned about their learning. We hope parents will communicate and cooperate with the school, either through parents' councils or through direct visits to schools, through student's performance follow-up forms on the Ministry's website and other forms of educational communication.

Dear Brothers and Sisters Dear students

In conclusion, I wish you all a happy school year full of industrious activity and crowned with high achievements. I also would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to school administrators, teachers and supervisors for their sincere efforts in implementing the Ministry's educational plans and programmes. I extend my highest gratitude and loyalty to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said — Sultan of Oman.

Happy new school year

An interview with a student

ABDULLAH Falah Al Shibli is a student from Saif Bin Hobairah School in Batinah North region who has benefited from the Career Guidance Resource Room, through Career Guidance Specialists. The aim of this interview is to point out the beneficial role of Career Guidance Specialists in helping the students to choose suitable subjects that satisfy his future career plans.

The first question was very direct asking the student how he chose the subjects for grade eleven. He answered that he did that depending on his ability and attitude towards these subjects and future ambition.

He went through specific procedures, starting with determining the career that he wanted. Then he looked for that in the students' guide, supplied by "The Higher Education Admis-



sion Center". After that, he discussed this with school Career Guidance Specialists. At the end, he was confident that the career he had chosen was suitable for him, his capability, interest and the job market.

The second question was about the challenges and obstacles that he faced during the

selection process. He summarised these particular points as follows:

- Negative interference of some parents while making decisions and choosing a career.
- Influence of classmates, who have different opinions.
- Not being mature enough to take such decisions.

Naturally, the third question was about how he overcame over these challenges.

Without hesitation, he replied that he could not ignore his parents. He invited his father to attend career-advising sessions, which were specifically for parents. During those sessions, the Career Guidance Specialists tried to enrich the parents' with background information to help and support the students while making decisions about their own future. Furthermore, these sessions supplied the parents with required information about careers in general.

As for dealing with his classmates' that reflected was entirely his choice. He said that he listened to them, but in the end, he made up his own mind and chose his own career.

Interviewed by:
Salim Khalfan Al Shibli

Interview

Q1: Please introduce yourself.

My name is Adnan bin Hussain bin Ali Al Ajmee. I was born in 1992 and I am in Grade 10. I live in Sohar.

Q2: What is your interest and hobbies?

I love to draw and write short stories and novels. However, I enjoy playing video games too.

Q3: What is your plan for the future?

I want to become an Engineer and my aim is to study hard, so I get admission at Sultan Qaboos University.

Q4: Tell us more about the Portfolio.

It is helpful for the Student to collect all important documents and achievement records during school years.

It also helped me greatly when I had to select subjects and I needed advice on how I to reach my aim to become an Engineer and to get into Sultan Qaboos University. I am glad that I have a Career Guidance Specialist at my school.

Q5: How does the Career Guidance Specialist help you at your school?

He gives us advice, follows up our studies, and helps us select our subjects for the next academic year. He also told us to build our Portfolio and keep updating it. I saw some students of grades 11 and 12 in a class with the Career Guidance Specialist. I asked them about it. They told me they were studying the book "Career Pathway". I will take that next school year.

"We are happy to have the Career Guidance Specialist to help us achieve our goals for a brighter future."

Youth themes

September 8

International Literacy Day
Ramadhan
Back to school

October 5

International Teacher Day

November 4

Unesco Day;
18, the National Day

December 3

International Day of Disabled
10, International Day of Human Rights

February

Teacher day

March 21

Mother Day

April 22

Earth Day

May 3

Asthma
31, World No Tobacco Day

The career guidance

THE career guidance group at Um Salama School had an interview with a grade ten student. The interview sheds light on how students choose the subjects for grade eleven and future studies. The interview was held with Ghayda Abdullah Al Ghaithi and it went as follows:

❖ How did you choose your specialisation?

According to my abilities and keeping my future career in mind.

❖ What is your ambition for your future career?

I hope to be a chemical engineer.

❖ Who helped you to choose your specialisation?

I chose it myself with the assistance of my family.

❖ What was the role of your family in choosing your specialisation?

Encouraging me, giving me advice and assisting me.

❖ How did the career guidance specialists help you in choosing your specialisation?

They illustrated some theories, which divide careers according to abilities and interests and presented us with the contents, together with examples.

Moreover, they asked us to refer to some ability tests to help us in choosing the best specialisation. They have always insisted on choosing the subjects according to abilities and skills and not be influenced by friends, teachers and members of family.

Furthermore, they invited

some teachers who illustrated the nature of all subjects that are taught in grades eleven and twelve and gave us a clear idea about the contents. They also invited people of different occupations to give us a thorough explanation of their careers and they supplied us with brochures for different careers.

They also exhibited different materials like clips, board magazines, bulletin magazines and handouts that help us choose our specialisation.

❖ What were the drawbacks that you faced in choosing the subjects?

The core subjects were easy for me to choose but I found difficulty in choosing the elective subjects, which fit my abilities.

❖ What do you think is the right way of choosing the subjects?

The student himself should take the responsibility in choosing the subjects according to his abilities, ambitions and skills with the assistance of his family and the Career Guidance Specialist.



Dear students, teachers, senior teachers, supervisors and school administrators,

IT gives me great pleasure to present you with the *Youth Observer* at the start of a new academic year. You will already be aware, from previous issues, that *Youth Observer* is an educational newspaper written by students in Omani schools in the Sultanate. The *Youth Observer* aims at improving your command of the English Language through reading and writing articles in English.

We publish eight issues of the *Youth Observer* per year starting from February to May, when we stop for the summer holiday. We resume at the beginning of September and continue until December.

Each issue of the *Youth Observer* has a "theme" and articles are written accordingly. The theme appears on the front page. All of you can write a story, poem, report or puzzle, draw a picture or anything else related to the issue theme. *Youth* editors will take care of the editing and proofreading to ensure that the piece of writing is not copied from the Internet etc to avoid plagiarism.

All articles should be sent to the *Youth Observer* e-mail by the first week of each month where *Youth* editors will then start editing and proofreading all articles to decide upon the appropriate ones to be published. Full name of the sender, his/her school, grade, region and a photograph of the writer must be sent with the article.

Youth Observer articles cover various areas of interest, such as career guidance, special needs, IT, Ministry of Education's latest news and projects, creativity zone, regional reports, art corner, Khala Zaytoona and others. Never the less, if any of you have any suggestions for improvement, please share them with us because the *Youth Observer* is your newspaper.

I would like to extend my very great appreciation to all the companies who sponsored the previous issues of the *Youth Observer* and call upon others who would like to contribute to a very special educational newspaper that aims at improving Omani students' command of the English language in a modern, interesting and creative way.

We thank all those students who contributed to the previous three issues and ask them to please submit more contributions. The efforts of all those wonderful teachers and supervisors who encouraged their students and schools to contribute are highly appreciated.

I, for my part, will endeavour to ensure that the coming issues are full of interesting articles for all of you to read and share with others. Take care.

— **Thuraya Saif Al Hosni**
Head of Your Observer Team, MoE

Muslim Wisdom

Holy month of Ramadhan

RAMADHAN is one of the holly moths of Allah, it is the (month) in which the Quran was sent down, as a guide to mankind.

Allah said in his holy Quran: "Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn piety and righteousness Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain taqwaas." (Q 2:183)

Muslims fast during Ramadhan to get more wages from Allah. Fasting means abstaining drinking and eating from dawn to dusk. It is a time for inner reflection, devotion to God and self-control; it is a very spiritual month.

People in each country have some habits during Ramadhan: In Egypt wealthy people make big tents where they put all kinds of food for the poor Muslims to eat their *fatoor*. Egyptians and most Arab people eat sweets during Ramadhan nights, such as *basboosa*, *baqlawa*, custard and *luqaymat*.

In Oman, many people drink laban and eat dates for *fatoor* and go to Magreb prayer. After that the whole family gathers to eat many kinds of food such as: rice, samboosa and soup. And some times they make big meals.

At the middle of Ramadhan most Omani regions celebrates *Qaranqashooh* which is a very old Omani event.

Kids at the day of *Qaranqashooh* dress nicely and carry containers or bags and go to the neighbourhood singing a special song. Parents prepare mixture of sweets, coins and popcorn to give the children at that special night.

In other Gulf countries this event is called *Qarqaoon*. It was meant to help the poor families through their children with some money to prepare for the Eid al Fitr.

Ramadhan is the month of generosity where Muslim people are supposed to help the ones in need as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said in his hadeeth shareef: The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "He who gives food for a fasting person to break his fast, he will receive the same reward as him, except that nothing will be reduced from the fasting persons reward." (Ahmad, at-Tirmidhee, Ibn Maajah, Ibn Hibbaan, Saheeh).

The sighting of the new moon at the end of Ramadhan heralds the celebration of Eid al Fitr.

— **Faisal Fahad Saif**
Grade 7, Assim bin Omar School, Muscat

Congratulations

DIFFERENT competitions were published in YO that were targeting different age groups of students as well as teachers and senior teachers. Many of YO readers were very creative and unique.

Today YO editors would like to congratulate those who won and thank all who participated. Special thanks must go to Batinah North and Dakhiliyah regions for their active participation in all *Youth Observer* issues and competitions. The results are as follow:

STUDENTS COMPETITIONS

Poetry writing: "The day Oman won":

- 1st - **Hamed Ahmed Al Badri**, Grade 6, Al Kamel School, Batinah North
- 2nd - **Shurooq Salem Al Zawawi**, Grade 7, Al Sahwa School, Muscat
- 3rd - **Nujood Waleed Al Hashar**, Grade 7 Green, Al Sahwa School, Muscat

Powerpoint Presentation:

- 1) **Qais Saif Al Hashmi**, Grade 8, Al Suwaiq Basic Education School, Batinah North
- 2) **Mohammed Juma Al Hashmi**, Grade 8, Al Suwaiq Basic Education School, Batinah North,
- 3) **Mahmoud Dawod Al Shidi**, Grade 8, Al Suwaiq Basic Education School, Batinah North

Traditional Folk Tales:

- 1st - **The Scary Camel**
Majid Tariq Al Blushi, Grade 8, Ahmed bin Al Nadhr School, Dakhiliyah Region.
- 2nd - **After The Sinistral Comes The Affluence**
Safa Saud Al Qassabi, Grade 9
- 3rd - **A Great Blessing**
Sarah Ali Al Harthy, Grade 10 Um Hani School, Dakhiliyah Region

Mabrook

Students graduated from Omar Bin Al Khatab Institute (12th grade)

“THE only place where dreams are impossible is in your own mind” Emalie. The 12th grade student of Omar bin Al Khatab Institute for visually challenged students and 12th grade students of Al Amal school for students with hearing aids proved that impossible is a word doesn't exist in their dictionaries.

With hope, ambitious, hard work and faith 10 visually challenged boys and girls and 18 student with hearing aids graduated from 12th grade full of enthusiasm and willingness to contribute to the society and to be a model to the other boys and girls with disabilities.

Many of them are willing to continue their higher education in one of the Omani colleges and universities just as equal as other students.



Omar bin Al Khatab graduates are:

1. Fayza Salim Salih Al Shmaly
2. Fayza Khamis Salim Al Kalbani
3. Maryam Qahtan Saif Al Raisi
4. Rahma Saeed Salim Al Azri
5. Laila Saeed Juma Al Kindi
6. Suaad Hamood Saeed Al Sawafi
7. Yaqoob Salam Khalfan Al Sabahi
8. Anwar Awadh Aman Bait Jameel
9. Salim Khalfan Dwaihi Al Dawyani
10. Moosa Bader Mahmood Al Blushi

Al Amal School graduates are:

1. Ayman Rashid Said Al Hadi
2. Hatim Said Harith Al Farei
3. Salman Abdullah Saif Al Wahibi
4. Samir Humood Abdullah Al Hashmi
5. Abdullah Mabrook Sabit Al M'awi
6. Faisal Said Suliman Al Hatmi
7. Majid Khamis Ali Al Ameri
8. Mundher Khamis Salim Al Rahbi
9. Haitham Nasser Salim Al Hasni
10. Aseela Saeed Juma Al Ruzaiqi
11. Amal Ahmed Murad Al Balushi
12. Ranea Salman Merza
13. Zakeya Juma Hedab Al Whaibi
14. Salama Ali Zayb Al Balushi
15. Lubna AbdulRhman Hamood Al Tae
16. Khalid Adbullah Salim Al darmaki
17. Mazin Khaleefa Hamed Al amri
18. Masood Saif Masood Saidi



Sign Language



J



K

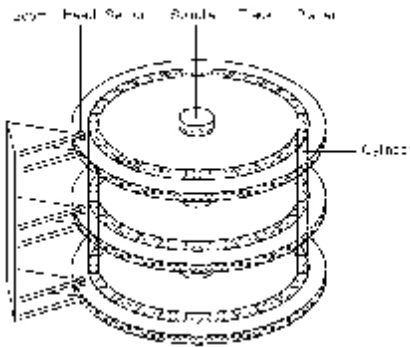


L

Memory

“**M**EMORY” is a place to store Data, Images, Music Files, Videos and other stuff. A Hard Disk Drive (HDD) is considered one type of memory. A HDD is divided into Plates and Cylinders, which contain this memory. Here is how a standard HDD might look

Speed), Backup Features, and Write Protection Feature as well. A HDD can be either Internal (inside the Computer), or External (can be carried with you just like a pocket wallet). Some types of HDD are IDE, SATA, and SCSI, those names depends on the Connection type been used to transfer data from and



Usually, HDD can be read from or written to. There are so many companies provide a variety of HDD Types, Sizes, and it might also have extra features like (More Read Write

to a HDD. A HDD Consists of Portions of Memory called bit, and it has other Memory Portions which are the multiplications of 2 so many times.

It's listed as follows:

Bit: A one Digit Consists of either 1 or 0

Byte: Consists of 8 Bits

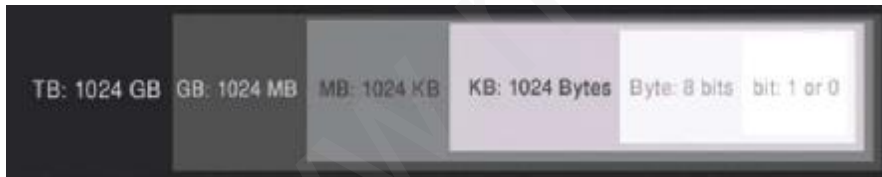
KB: A standard measure of data used with memory. Equal to 1,024 bytes (2 to the tenth power).

MB: A standard measure of data used with memory. Equal to 1,024 KB (2 to the tenth power).

GB: A standard measure of data used with memory. Equal to 1,024 MB (2 to the tenth power).

TB: A standard measure of data used with memory. Equal to 1,024 GB (2 to the tenth power).

Next time we will talk about another types of memories, and the difference between reading and writing data from a memory device.



TB = 1024 (1024 (1024 (1024 (8))) bits in Total
This is Size Capacity Measurement Values

Internet

What is Internet?

THE Internet is one of the newest methods of allowing people to communicate with each other. The Internet lets computers “talk” to each other by sending words, pictures, movies and music over telephone lines.

The thing that makes the Internet possible is the fact that all of these different kinds of messages can be digitised. When signals of any sort are digitised, it is converted to a series of electrical signals called bits. A computer can take this string of bits and send it over telephone lines to another computer. The other computer then can change the bits back to words, music or pictures.

What is the Internet good for?



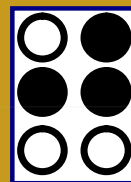
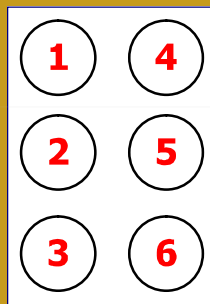
The Internet can do a lot of neat things. E-mail letters can be sent easily to people all over the world, without having to paste on stamps or wait a long time for mail delivery. Newsgroups let people who are interested in a particular subject discuss it with thousands of other people. There are newsgroups for just about anything you can think of — from kite flying to classical music.

You can use the Internet for shopping, for playing computer games, for finding out the latest news, or for trying to sell your old bicycle. One of the nicest things about the Internet is that if you have a question you need to answer, there is usually someone within reach who can help.

Source:
Tiny Tot, Tell Me More #4, Tiny Tot Publication, 2001

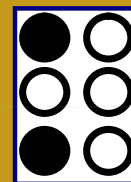
Learn
Braille
in an easy way

Braille Cell



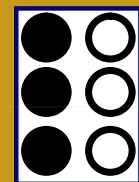
Dot number 2,4,5
mean letter

J



Dot number 1,3
mean letter

K



Dot number 1,2,3
mean letter

L

The Jewel of Muscat

WOULD you like to try your hand at being a trader and adventurer across the Indian Ocean like Sindbad the sailor?

Well now you can, thanks to an exciting website which offers games and quizzes to help students explore the treasures of Oman's glorious past on the seas.

You can try your hand at build-

ing a dhow or set sail from Oman to see if you can survive storms at sea to trade goods in India and China and return home a rich adventurer!

The website is part of a project called the Jewel of Muscat which is rebuilding an ancient trading vessel that once crossed the oceans between Oman, India and China.

Students who go to the Educa-



tion section of www.jewelofmuscat.tv will find two games along with quizzes and information about the Geography, History and Science of Oman's past at sea.

The materials are divided into three categories for students aged 6 to 8, 9 to 12 and 13 to 16.

The Jewel of Muscat is a joint project of between the Foreign Ministries of Oman and Singapore.

The ship is a reconstruction of a shipwreck where divers found valuable treasure of gold and beauti-

ful pottery.

When the ship is finished later this year it will sail from Oman to Singapore.

There it will be put in a museum with the treasure from the wreck.

There will also be more chances to visit the Jewel of Muscat before and after it is launched in September.

Anyone interested in visiting the ship should contact Thuraya Saif Al Hosni on 2477 3147 tsalhosni@moe.com.

AHMED was a ten-year-old boy. He lived with his father, mother and grandfather in a big house. He was happy; he liked school and was an excellent student. He loved his grandfather a lot and always spent his free time with him talking and laughing.

One day after he finished his homework, Ahmed went to his grandfather's room as usual. He told him about his day at school.

After a while Ahmed's father, Ali, entered the room. He sat silently for a long time. The grandfather asked his son, "You look worried? What's wrong?"

Ali answered, "Father, you know how much I care about you. I have seen you alone for a

long time. I am afraid you don't have any friends. You should try to interact with others, make friends and enjoy your time with people of your age. Ahmed and his grandfather were surprised when they heard this.

The grandfather said, "What do you want me to do my son?"

Ali said, "Some of my friends told me about places for old people. They can meet other old people and spend time with them. They also enjoy many activities in a friendly environment. What do you think of living there?"

Ahmed was surprised. He had

never heard about such places.

"Do you want me to go there?" the grandfather asked.

Ali smiled, "Yes, father. I am sure you will be happy there."

The next day, Ahmed went along with his father and grandfather. They soon reached a big house. They left their car outside and entered the gate. Ahmed saw a big board above the main door — **AI RAHMA HOUSE**.

The grandfather saw some other old people and he went to join them. Ahmed and his father said goodbye to him and left.

Ahmed could not understand why his father wanted his grand-

father to stay at this place instead of with them as he always did.

"Why did we leave grandfather there? Why can't he stay with us?" Ahmed asked.

"Your grandfather will be much happier. There are also people to take care of him," his father answered.

"Is this house good for him?" Ahmed asked.

"Yes, it is good for all old people," answered his father with a smile.

Ahmed kept silent for some time then said, "Please Dad, Give me the address and street

number of Al Rahma House."

The father was surprised and asked his son "Why?"

"So that when you get old, I can take you there too." Ahmed replied.

When the father heard Ahmed's answer, he was silent. He could not drive. He stopped the car and cried. After that, he returned to Al Rahma House, picked his father up and took him back home.

The father realised that he was wrong. He had learned an important lesson from his son — a lesson he would never forget.

— **By Abeer Abdullah Al Majaini**
Grade 8B
Widam Al Ghaff Basic Education
Cycle 2 (5-12)

A moment of silence

International Day for Illiteracy



THE whole world celebrated the International Day for Illiteracy Eradication on September 8 every year according to the decision issued by the general assembly of UNESCO in its 14th meeting in 1966.

On this day, the international organisation appeals to the world's government, organisation, government and non-government establishments, in the name of human solidarity, to intensify efforts and exchange experiences and advice on the best options of combating illiteracy which is a barrier of the constructive role of development to realise a renaissance that leads to a cultural, social and constructional revival where the peoples of the world enjoy love and peace, and that the governments of the world's states have to set out plans and strategies that will lead to promptly combating illiteracy and its destructive impacts by transforming the principles of these strategies into procedural plans that will be put into action.

In response to this recommendation, the Sultanate regularly celebrates on these days to take part in celebrations of the Arab world and the international community on these occasions and takes up the opportunity to spread awareness among the Omani public on the problem of illiteracy and the danger it poses to the individual and the society, and also to highlight the efforts being exerted to combat it calling the people to benefit from the opportunities that the government has made available in all areas.

Moreover, in appreciation of the im-

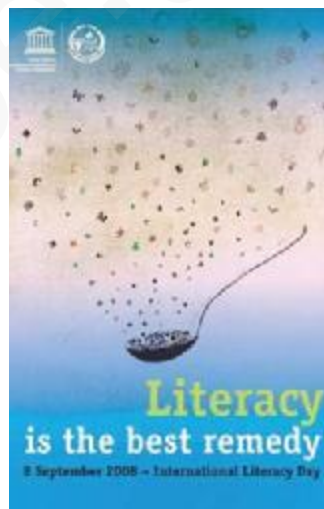
Illiteracy is a complex social problem. Added to the fact that it is one of the major causes of backwardness, it is a social phenomenon that equally affects individuals and societies and forms a basic obstacle that hinders progress and obstructs human resources' capacities to effectively perform their roles in the process of development

portance of these two occasions, the Ministry organises an annual celebration on 8th January to honour the teachers and staff of illiteracy eradication with extensive media coverage.

As for the International Day for illiteracy eradication, the occasion is celebrated through television, daily newspapers and other means of media. The event is also covered by the seminars, lecturers and press reports that are held in reverence of the occasion.

Dear students,

Let us learn more about illiteracy pro-



grammes in the Sultanate of Oman and the efforts of the Ministry of Education in this area.

Illiteracy is a complex social problem. Added to the fact that it is one of the major causes of backwardness, it is a social phenomenon that equally affects individuals and societies and forms a basic obstacle that hinders progress and obstructs human resources' capacities to effectively perform their roles in the process of development.

The negative impacts of illiteracy on development have attracted the concern of various levels of people regionally

and internationally. In our Arab World, that concern resulted in the unanimous agreement of the Arab countries to draft and approve "The Arab Strategy for Illiteracy Eradication" in the conference hosted by Baghdad in 1976.

The strategy specified the scope of the problem, the objectives, the stages of implementations, the principles and trends on which work would be based and the executive procedures of such principles.

The eradication of illiteracy was a primary target of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. Since the start of the renaissance in 1970, the process of illiteracy eradication progressed side by side with the spread of education among the young.

As an activity, the eradication of illiteracy started in the academic year 1973/1974. At first, the time duration was (2) years after which learners were awarded the certificate of liberation from illiteracy, which was equivalent to successfully completing the 4th year of (general education). After that, the learners joined the adult education held in evening classes considering that the evening period suits the learners who are busy with work in the morning period.

In an effort to improve the services of illiteracy eradication, and due to the changes in the Omani study courses and in conformity with the United Nation's Convention on illiteracy eradication, the time duration of the stage of illiteracy eradication was extended in the

◆ *Continued on page 9*

year 2005/2006 to become (3) years after which the learners join the 7th class of general education in the educational centres designated for adult education.

The Start of the Activity of Illiteracy Eradication in the Sultanate:

The progression of illiteracy eradication in the Sultanate started in the year 1973/1974 when a group of sections were opened for teaching illiterates in a number of schools of general education. The next step was the ministerial decision No (302) in 1975 issuing the illiteracy eradication system.

The system was amended in 1981 (appendix 1) to conform with the Omani educational philosophy that is based on the equality between citizens in rights, duties and equal opportunities for all, young and adults.

The system defined the illiterate as being, "Any individual above the age of (10) who is not enrolled in any educational institution, and has not reached the level of employment in reading and writing in Arabic, mathematics and other areas of knowledge".

The system also specified the minimum level of employment as being the ability to read correctly and to understand, the ability to write a correct paragraph, expressing oneself clearly in writing, the ability to read and write numbers, and the ability to carry out the basic arithmetical calculations required by an individual in their daily life.

Illiteracy Eradication's Study Plans and Curricula

The current study plan of illiteracy eradication lasts (3) academic years. Each year consists of (7.5) months.



The eradication of illiteracy was a primary target of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. Since the start of the renaissance in 1970, the process of illiteracy eradication progressed side by side with the spread of education among the young

In the first year, the plan consists of (15) periods a week for male learners and (16) for females (including one period of family education taught to females only). In the second year (18) periods are taught to male learners and (19) to females, while the third year's plan consists of (25) periods taught to all male and female learners.

The time allotted for the period is (40) minutes. In the first and second years (4) basic subjects, are taught with a separate book for each subject while in the

third year (6) subjects are taught, also with a separate book for each.

The Qualitative Expansion in the Programmes of Illiteracy Eradication

In addition to opening classes for the learners at the illiteracy eradication centres, the Ministry carried out a number of illiteracy eradication programmes that target certain categories of the society, and regardless of the targeted category, those liberated from illiteracy are provided with a set of books named, "The Adults' Library". These books cover various cultural areas and are intended to motivate those liberated from illiteracy to pursue further free reading.

- The Adults' Library
- Occupational Programmes for the Firemen at Seeb and Salalah Airport.
- Occupational Programmes for Agricultural Workers.
- Programme of Teaching Arabic to Non-Arabic Speakers.
- The TV programme for Teaching Reading and Writing
- Special Programmes for Educating Women
- Eradicating the Illiteracy of those with Special Cases
- Eradicating the Illiteracy of Those with Special Needs
- The Yields of the Illiteracy Eradica-



tion Efforts

- The "Literate Village" Project

Co-operation with Arab and International Organisations

Channels of relationship between the Ministry of Education and the Arab and international organisation have always been extended since the Sultanate officially joined them. The organisations referred to are the following:

- The United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).
- The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Iesco)
- The Arab League, Educational and Cultural Organization (Alecso)
- The United Nations' International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef)
- The Arab Educational Office of the Gulf States, which is an Arab Gulf organisation that operates within the member states to serve educational goals.

The efforts of the ministry in this concern targeted benefiting from these organisations in all fields that support educational and cultural activities at the level of education, generally, and at the level of technically and physically supporting illiteracy eradication in particular. Some of the most significant contributions that have been realised in this area are:

- The continued support in the exchange and enrichment of experiences with all that is novel and beneficial through exchanging visits and holding seminars and workshops inside and outside the Sultanate.
- Offering material support in the area of rewriting the illiteracy eradication curricula and dispatching specialised experts to benefit from their experiences in offering consultation services in the fields of new projects and programmes.
- Contributing to the family education projects.
- Providing the activity with the periodicals, magazines and publications that reflect the regional and international experiences and practices.
- Contributing to the production of a documentary film that tracks the progression of illiteracy eradications and highlights the efforts that have been exerted in this field.
- Contributing to the implementation of the training courses for the staff of illiteracy eradication.
- The areas of co-operation were not restricted to those organisations. The efforts exerted comprised promoting the same aspects with brotherly and friendly countries through signing several agreements aiming to serve all educational areas.

To save time, effort, money for parents

Ministry of Education, Oman Mobile sign partnership agreement



ONE of the major aims for the educational policies in Oman is providing quality of education to all children, and in order to insure this, ministry of Education has signed an agreement with one of her strongest and biggest partners, Oman Mobile.

The agreement which was signed by His Excellency the Ministry's Under-Secretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs Mostafa bin Ali bin Abdullatif, on behalf of the Ministry of Education and the Chief Executive Officer of Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel) Dr Amer bin Awadh al Rawas, on behalf of Oman Mobile.

By this agreement, Oman Mobile would provide SMS service to its subscribers of the



parents of students.

This service would enable parents to enquire about the progress of their kids in school, follow-up their attendance and absence, enquire about any issue related to their sons and also facilitates the transfer of students from one school to another through text messages.

If any of the parents, For



instance, want to know how punctual their son is in school, they would send a text message bearing the symbol (A) and the student number which is registered in the education portal to number 90390, after having subscribed to the service.

Fees for this service are minimal as they do not exceed RO 1.5 only, while it saves effort, time and money for the parents in following up the progress of their kids in school in a regular manner.

Both sides believe that this project touches the educational process as a whole through the school administration and the educational services provided by the educational portal, and through interaction with the parents.

Oman Mobile is a very strong partner with the Ministry of Education that tries to ensure the best quality of education is provided to all students in all Omani regions.

Influenza (H1N1)

Be safe at school

By Dr Noora Alhosni, MoH

INFLUENZA (H1N1) is a new virus to which most people have no or little immunity and, therefore, can cause more infections than in seasonal flu.

The new influenza (H1N1) appears to be as infectious as seasonal influenza, and is spreading fast particularly among young people. The severity of the disease ranges from very mild to severe illnesses that can result in death. Majority of people who have the virus experience the milder disease and recover without antiviral treatment or medical care.

How do people become infected with the virus?

The virus is spread from person-to-person. It is transmitted

as easily as the normal seasonal flu. It can be passed to other people by exposure to infected droplets expelled by coughing or sneezing that can be inhaled, or that can contaminate hands or surfaces by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Signs and symptoms

Symptoms of influenza (H1N1) are flu-like, including fever, cough, headache, muscle and joint pain, sore throat and runny nose, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea.

Prevention at school

Ministry of Education is working closely with Ministry of Health to keep all schoolchildren

safe and healthy; the following are some steps to be adopted at school:

1. If the person is at high risk for influenza complications, who becomes ill with influenza-like illness, especially those with chronic diseases or low immunity should go to nearest health centre as soon as possible. Early treatment with antiviral medications is very important for people at high risk because it can prevent hospitalisations and deaths.
 2. To prevent spread, people who are ill should cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. They need to stay home when they are unwell, clean their hands regularly, and keep some distance from healthy people, as much as possible.
 3. Schools should maintain adequate stock of personal hygiene products like soap and alcohol-based hand gel. Students should be given enough time to wash their hands during the day.
 4. School staff should routinely clean areas that students and staff touch often with the cleaners they usually use.
 5. Schoolteachers and school health visitors must know the basic information about H1N1 to reassure the students and have to make themselves available to answer the questions and address all concerns.
 6. Schools need to try some ways of separating students if class room is crowded. These can be as simple as moving desks farther apart.
- An effective and safe H1N1 vaccine will be essential to prevent the spread of the disease, but it will be some months before it is available, so all students and teachers should take the above precautions until we have the vaccine.

The Difference between Cold and Swine Flu Symptoms

Symptom	Cold	Swine Flu
Fever	Fever is rare with a cold.	Fever is usually present with the flu in up to 80% of all flu cases. A temperature of 100°F or higher for 3 to 4 days is associated with the flu.
Coughing	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A non-productive (non-mucus-producing) cough is usually present with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
Aches	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Severe aches and pains are common with the flu.
Stuffy Nose	Stuffy nose is commonly present with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	Stuffy nose is not commonly present with the flu.
Chills	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	60% of people who have the flu experience chills.
Tiredness	Tiredness is fairly mild with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate to severe with the flu.
Sneezing	Sneezing is commonly present with a cold.	Sneezing is not common with the flu.
Sudden Symptoms	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days.	The flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours. The flu hits hard and includes sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.
Headache	A headache is fairly uncommon with a cold.	A headache is very common with the flu, present in 80% of flu cases.
Sore Throat	Sore throat is commonly present with a cold.	Sore throat is not commonly present with the flu.
Chest Discomfort	Chest discomfort is mild to moderate with a cold.	Chest discomfort is often severe with the flu.

Your awareness on preventions of (H1N1)A flu, will protect you and the Community.



Practicing healthy habits like washing hands with water, soap or alcohol formula, covering mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing will provide protection for you and others too.




(H1N1)A flu hotline is always available to answer all queries. For further information please call: 92465422-92466662



Dear Citizens & Residents

With best regards
Ministry of Health

After The Sinistral Comes The Affluence

It was a beautiful modern villa. The door was decorated with an Islamic design. It was coloured brown, and had a golden handle. In the front of the house, there was a garden full of roses — pink, red and white roses. The scent was lovely, a natural perfume, that makes you want to stay there forever.

Inside the house, there was a passage painted bright brown. When you walked down the big passage, you could see some of the valuable Egyptian figurines. They were expensive and the work of professionals. You could not walk down the passage without seeing the two big bedrooms. One was red and was for Noor. The other was red too and was for Noor's parents. They looked the same, but her parent's one had a double bed. The house also had a bathroom attached to each bedroom.

Noor's family was rich. They had a lot of money, but they never let anybody work for them. Her mother cooked and cleaned the whole house, the passage, the big kitchen and the bedrooms. Her mother was a good cook, and the dishes she cooked were delicious. One Thursday night, her mother cooked them a delicious dinner.

Her father had been upset during the week. He decided to tell his family the truth that night. He said, "I am very unhappy. My conscience is bothering me." Noor's mother said, "What's the matter?" He began to cry and said, "Everyday in the market I cheat people. I sell them things that are spoilt. I have had enough. I do not want this money anymore." Noor's mother said, "You can give the money back. Then God will forgive you." He said, "I do not have the money, I am bankrupt and that is what is bothering me so much." Noor said, "You can sell this house and then you could give your customers their money back." Her mother said, "Yes, you could do that."

The next morning, he put a board up in the beautiful garden. The board said 'FOR SALE'. A man came by to look at the house. He was pleased with it and said his wife would like it too. He bought it



for 300,000 dirhams. Noor's family vacated the house. They went to live with her grand mom.

The new family moved into Noor's old house. They had one son. His name was Saeed. They did not change anything in the house. The son took Noor's old bedroom and his parents took the other one. They were also rich, but did the work themselves. Saeed's mother was also a good cook.

One Friday night she made some cookies and candies. She put the food on the table and called Saeed and his father. When they started to eat, they got a smell of gas. Saeed's mother went to the kitchen to check that she had turned off the gas. When she entered the kitchen, there was a great explosion.

Saeed and his father hurried to the kitchen. They found it in flames. They saw Saeed's mother lying dead on the floor. Saeed's father said to his son, "Let's get out of here." Saeed was crying. He did not want to leave his mother's body. His father pulled him away and they both jumped out of the window. They were safe. They cried for help, but no one heard. The neighbours were not at home. All of them were on holiday abroad.

Saeed and his father never slept that night. They watched their house burn down, with tears falling from their eyes. The next morning there was no house. It had burnt to ashes. He and his father went to his uncle's house. They told him about the accident. All the family members came. They had a wake for Saeed's

mother for three days.

After three days, Saeed and his father went back to where their house had once stood. They wanted to build a new house themselves. They started digging. Saeed's mattock hit something hard. He dug around it and discovered it was a pot. He threw it down and it smashed open. Hundreds of golden coins scattered. He called out to his father. When his father saw the coins, he said, "This isn't our money. We should give it back to the real owner."

Who is the real owner of the coins? They decided to ask the previous owners of the house. They went to meet them and asked them about the gold coins. They replied that the coins were not theirs. In fact, they knew nothing about them. Saeed's father then suggested that they go to the judge and let him decide what is to be done with the coins.

After the judge heard the story, he thought for a while. Then he said to the first owner, "Do you have a young daughter?" He answered, "Yes, I have." The judge then told Saeed's father, "You should let your son marry his daughter. Both the fathers agreed. Noor was beautiful and Saeed was happy. They got married. They used the money to build a new house. Noor's family moved in with them. They all lived happily. Two years later, Noor and Saeed had a baby girl. They named her as "Afifa", after Saeed's mother.

— **Safa Saud Al Qassabi**
Grade 9

Idioms at YO!

For this issue, the YO Team looked at some simple words in English with a connection to the environment. Would you believe there are sayings and idioms in English which use these words — clean, dirty, plastic and rubbish.

● Here's the first word — **clean**. The two sayings are 'clean as a whistle' and 'clean up your act'. In order to make clear and pure sounds a whistle has to be absolutely clean. Anything or anyone as clean as a whistle has been judged to be guiltless, or flawless, and not involved in anything illegal.

'He hasn't got a criminal record, he's as clean as a whistle.'

The second saying is 'clean up your act'. If someone tells you to 'clean up your act' they are asking you to stop doing something other people do not approve of and start behaving in a more acceptable way.

'The organisation wasn't telling the truth about their involvement in illegal dumping. It's time they cleaned up their act otherwise problems such as all the fish dying may occur in the future.'

● Here's the second word — **dirty**. If someone gives you a dirty look then perhaps be careful! It means they are looking at you in an angry or disapproving way.

'I don't know what I said to annoy her but she really gave me a dirty look.'

● **Plastic** is the third word. We all use plastic bags but did you know plastic money is becoming more popular?

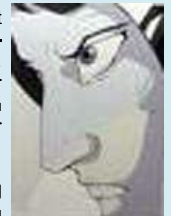
'I like to use plastic when I travel. I don't feel safe using cash.'

This of course refers to plastic credit cards — plastic money. I don't know of any country that uses plastic bags as currency! Do you? WE HOPE NOT!

● 'What a load of rubbish!'

Has anyone ever said that to you? I hope not! It usually means they don't believe what you or someone else has told them. Maybe they have been reading an article in the newspaper or heard something on the news that they don't believe.

'Have you read the article about what that company is doing to reduce greenhouse gases? What a load of rubbish! I just don't believe that is true.'



Language Tips — Confusing words!

A PAIR of words which English learners sometimes find confusing is to wear or to use.

People quite often say:



I like using blue jeans and a T-shirt.
I like using a hat that is fashionable.
I will use my favourite shirt tonight.
I'm using a skirt and black shoes.

Whereas to wear/wearing means to have something on your body as a piece of clothing.



For example:
I'm wearing a hat.
Sana is wearing a wedding ring.
Fahad likes wearing

sneakers.

Exercise:

To use/using means to do something with a machine, a method, an object, etc for a particular purpose.

For example:

I'm using my dad's car.
Can I use your phone?
I have some equipment you can use.

Shatha and Badria from Nizwa went to the Fashion Show last night. Shatha a long skirt and a floral shirt. Badria decided to her favorite abaya with her new dress. They both scarves. Badria was late because she was public transport. Shatha her friend's GSM to call her to see where she was as she was getting worried that they would be late for the show.

Remember when you describe a piece of clothing using patterns, remember the order of adjectives:

colour	pattern	origin	material	noun
red		Spanish	leather	boots
brown	floral		cotton	shirt
blue	checked			jacket
colourful		Italian		bag

Your personal carbon footprint

How you can help keep Oman clean!



Bring your own shopping bag

WHEN Intisar, an Omani went to visit Australia, she was surprised at the supermarket when the cashier asked if she would like a shopping bag. She was even more surprised when she was asked to pay for it!

To reduce the use of plastic bags, Australian shoppers are encouraged to bring their own bags from home. If they don't, they have to buy them.

YO is calling on all students to STOP using plastic bags and to encourage your fathers and mothers to bring their own bags when they go shopping!

Successful Debates

MANY students have written in Masking for information about conducting successful debates and running a debate club.

Here are three reasons why debates are a good way to practise a foreign language:

- they can energise students and teachers
- subjects, which once appeared boring and abstract, can come to life in a debate situation
- students become actively involved in their own learning process



Students must:

- ask themselves what the issue means to them personally
- research the social, political, ethical and historical contexts in which the issues are situated
- learn to see complex problems from widely different perspectives
- learn and use new vocabulary
- be able to think on their feet and react quickly to opposing arguments

Because all this learning is geared towards a specific purpose (performing well in the debate itself) students have added incentive and a clear goal to work towards.

a secretary and a treasurer from committed members of the club. New debaters can learn from experienced members.

Topics

Topics can be local issues, which affect the people, and or environment around you personally, or more global issues. Below is the address of a fantastic debate website with great topics and arguments, ideas for activities and much, much more. Have fun! www.idebate.org

Here's an activity to practise in your club

Starting a debate club

A successful debate club has a strong sense of group identity. No one member works alone, rather, the whole club should work as a team.

Some useful steps to creating a successful debate club:

Where will the club meet?

- A club-room should:
- be easily accessible to all members,
 - have resources such as dictionaries, newspapers and if possible access to the Internet

How often should the club meet?

The club members should meet regularly to build friendship and trust. Weekly meetings of all club members will improve fluency. Members can practise and prepare arguments on a variety of topics.

Leadership

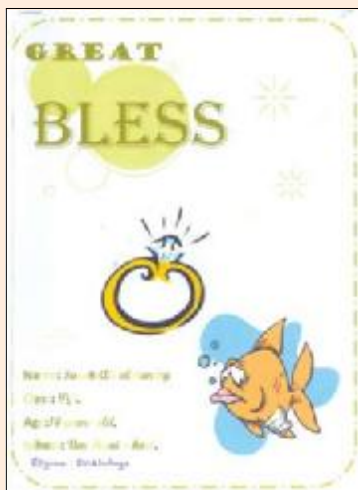
Students should elect a president,



Go to www.idebate.org, open up the home page and choose a debate topic. Each topic has a list of arguments — the pros and cons. Divide the members of your debate club into 4 groups. Print out the arguments and cut them up. Make a set for each group. Distribute one set to each group.

The members must read the arguments and decide if they belong on the pro side or on the con side (against side). Then they must match each pro argument to a con argument. Check the members understand any new vocabulary, then hold a 15 minute debate — two groups argue for the motion and two groups argue against.

A Great Blessing



(My grandmother told me this story a long time ago while she was making Omani bread. I would like to share it with you.)

ONCE upon time, there lived a woman. She and her husband had been married for many years, but they never had any children. Although she never had children, she was happy and satisfied.

This woman had a habit which annoyed her husband a lot. She drove him nuts. However, this habit was actually a good one. Before doing anything, she always said, "In the name of Allah." She said this to make her life blessed. Her husband tried to convince her that what she was doing was not useful, and it was not going to get her anywhere. She always ignored him because she believed that she was right.

One day her husband felt that she had crossed her limits. He had got to the point where he felt he had to do something. He spent the entire day and night thinking. Finally, he got an idea, which he thought would prove to his wife that what she was doing was not doing her any good. He bought her a ring. When he gave it to her, she said, "In the name of Allah" and before she wore it, she said the same thing.

Later, while she was cooking, she took off the ring and put it back into the box. Her husband took it when she was not looking. He went to the beach and rented a boat. When he was far away from the shore, he threw the ring into the water. Then he returned home.

Next day he bought a fish and asked his wife to cook it for him. He also asked her to wear the new ring because her finger looked beautiful when she was wearing it. She went to her room to the place where she left the ring. Before she had opened the box, she said, "In the name of Allah". She did not find the ring. She looked everywhere but she still did not find it. She decided to finish her cooking and not tell her husband anything. When she cut the fish, she found the ring inside the fish. She cleaned it up and put it on. When her husband saw the ring on her finger, he got mad. He told her that he had thrown the ring in the sea. She told him that she found it inside the fish. He realised that he was wrong. He apologised to her and changed himself.

— Sarah Ali Al Harthy
Grade 10, Um Hani School
Dakhiliyah Region

The Scary Camel

ONE day my grandmother told me a traditional Omani tale. It was about a poor man called Mubark. He lived in a small hut with his children. One day, he decided to travel to find a job, so he could buy food for his children.

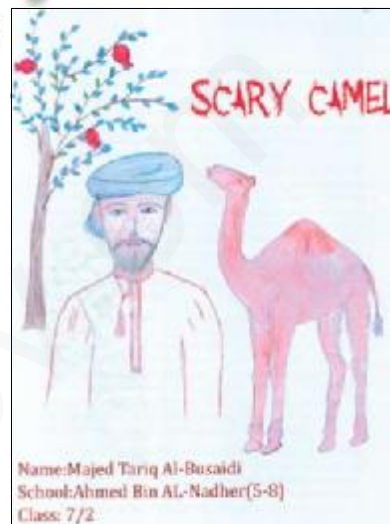
He had a good friend. He told his good friend about his plan, and asked him to look after his children. He told him he could take half of anything he would send. The next morning, he rode his donkey towards the big desert. After few days, he found a great kingdom. He asked the king to give him a job.

The king said, "I have only one job, and I will pay you four pieces of silver." Mubark agreed immediately. The king said, "But it's a dangerous job." Mubark asked, "What is the job?" The king answered, "I want you to watch my camels." Mubark said, "That's an easy job." The king said, "There's one problem." "What's it?" said Mubark. The king answered, "There's a big camel in my herd. It kills a guard every year. It has already killed ninety nine guards." Mubark thought of his starving children and agreed to work. He was very active. He always started his work early. Every month he sent the four silver pieces to his friend, so he could buy food and give his children.

After a year, the big camel attacked Mubark. He ran and climbed a pomegranate tree. He saw three big pomegranates. One of them was ripe so he picked and hid it for his children. When the camel went away, Mubark got down from the tree.

He sent the pomegranate with the four silver pieces to his friend. When his friend received them, he took two silver pieces for himself and put the other two aside for Mubark's children. When he cut the pomegranate, he was surprised. It was full of small pieces of gold. He took them to the market and sold them. With the money he bought food and clothes for the children.

At the end of the second year, the big camel attacked Mubark again. Once more he ran and climbed the pomegranate tree. He saw two big pomegranates. He picked the ripe one and hid



it for his children. When the camel went away, Mubark got down and sent the pomegranate with the silver pieces to his friend. When his friend got them, he cut the pomegranate. It was full of small diamonds. He took them to the market and sold them. He bought a big house with furniture for Mubark's family.

At the end of the third year, the big camel attacked Mubark again. He ran to the pomegranate tree and picked the last pomegranate.

When the camel went away, Mubark went to the king and told him that he wanted to go back because he missed his family. When he arrived home, he was surprised to find his children living in a big house. He was very excited when his friend told him the story of the pomegranate.

— Majid Tariq Al Blushi
Grade 8
Ahmed bin Al Nadhr School
Dakhiliyah Region

Calling all English Language Teachers

What positive effects has YO had on your teaching?

Maybe you learnt some new ideas at a YO workshop, or have adapted some YO materials. Perhaps you introduced your students to the YO magazine.

Send your entry to YO and you could win great teaching prizes from YO. PLUS a member of the YO TEAM will make a special visit to your school and meet with you, other

teachers and your students. Send us a letter of no more than 200 words in English to:

YO, Ministry of Education,
PO Box 3, Ruwi 112,
Sultanate of Oman,
or email to youthobserver@moe.om
before October 30, 2009.

Back to school



THE summer vacation is coming to an end. A new school year is approaching. We can see both teachers and students getting ready to meet each other once more.

Yes, after a nice long vacation of relaxation and fun we are back to school again.

To find out more about how students are preparing themselves for this event, I visited some shopping centers. I spoke to some of the students. I found out that almost all of them are happy their schools are reopening. They expressed their happiness and joy about returning to school because they miss their friends, teachers and the school environment. Although, some of them were not excited about getting back

to the pressure of studying, exams and early to bed routine, they still had smiles on their faces. This was because they were shopping and buying new things for school.

On the other hand, this event of getting ready to go back to school could be hard on our parents' pockets. Many of the students tend to buy all new stuff; new bag, shoes, dresses, dishdashas, pens, etc. even though the old ones are still in very good shape. I asked some of the students in the shopping centers why do they buy new stuff each year? Most of them said, "We don't want our friends to laugh at us, we want to look special, we have enough money and so on. Allah said in his Holy Quran: "O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by

wearing your clean clothes), while praying and going round (the Tawaf of) the Kabah, and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not Al Musrifun (those who waste by extravagance). (al-araf,31)

The above Aya explains to us that we need to think well before we spend our money on things that are not necessary and before we put pressure on our parent's budgets.

Dear friends, we need to balance things and always think of other children who cannot afford to buy anything. The holy month of Ramadan is the right time for all of us to be generous and caring. If you have extra things you do not need, look for others who might be in real need. If your old stuff is still good, continue using it. Do something else with the money. It can come in use for the ones in need.

Back to school is an event that we celebrate each year. It is an event we will always enjoy.

Last but not least, I'd just like to say to my dear friends; try to have as much fun as you can, while you are still at school. School days are days that will never return and will never be forgotten. However, while you are having fun do not forget your studies, because your future depends on good grades.

Your friend,

— **Shaima Ahmed Al Hosni**
Grade 9

Assila bint Qais School, Muscat



THE DAY OMAN WON

I wait and wait
For the winning date.
We won the cup.
Oman is the top.
Our hero team
Achieved the dream.
How happy we are
To have the red star.

— **Hamed Ahmed Al Badri**
Grade 6, Al Kamel School
Batinah North

The day Oman won
The players are number one
It was seriously fun
And then it was all gone
Finished and done
For a moment I looked at the sun
And then I started to run
I told everyone to come
They shouted
This is the day Oman won

— **Shurooq Salem Al Zawawi**
Grade 7,
Al Sahwa School, Muscat

The players were wearing red
I was wearing red
Everybody was everywhere
It was nice there
It was fun and sad
I was there and it was hard
I closed my eyes
Then noises were coming to my ears
The omani players were holding the cup
The omani team is the top
IT'S THE DAY OMAN WON!!!

— **Nujood Waleed Al Hashar**
Grade 7, Green,
Al Sahwa School
Muscat



Dear Khala Zaitoona

Khala Zaitoona replies...

youth_observer@moe.om

Dear Khala Zaitoona,

Hi! My name is Mohanned and I am 16 years old. My problem is my friends. I don't know who is right and who is wrong! I can't trust anyone. I always find them selfish and childish.

— Mohanned

Dear Mohanned,

You didn't write enough details about the problem, but you need to know my dear that we all have our faults.

Nobody is perfect. Your friends may be right in some situations and wrong in others. You should judge according to your beliefs and what you feel is right.

Take care.

KHALA Zaitoona would like to thank all the students in Oman for all their letters. She is off to the UK to do her doctorate in counselling. She is very sad to be leaving the *Youth Observer* as she has loved every minute of her time working with students to help them find solutions to their problems.

The YO editorial team would like to wish her every success. We are so sad to see her leaving, but understand her need to aim for stars. We look forward to hearing all about her new life in the UK.

Khala Asia will be replacing Khala Zaitoona.

But who is Khala Asia?

She is a wonderful, companionate lady who is full of life. She has worked extensively as a counsellor in schools both in Oman and abroad and she looks forward to hearing all about your life, your ambitions, the challenges you face and she will do her best to help all those who get in touch.

Dear Ahmed,

I am happy that you realise how serious your problem is. This is the first step to solving it.

We must all have objectives (short term & long term) and accordingly we decide on our priorities. If one of your objectives is finishing school with good grades, then you will definitely not spend the whole day on the Internet. However, if your future means nothing to you then you can enjoy your Internet.

Time management, my dear, is very important to all of us. Divide your day correctly. Keep time for family, friends, studying, Internet and sports. You could study with some friends, until you feel you are able to study by yourself.

Take care.

Keep in touch

Send your questions to Khala Zaitoona on any subject regarding school, family, friends, etc. Please include your name, school & wilayat.

My e-mail address is:

youth_observer@moe.om

Hello! My name is Moayad and I am almost 16. My problem is that I am underweight. I only weigh 41 kg and I feel very uncomfortable. I started to notice my problem when I was 14. I eat healthy food and I play sport. My friends started to make fun of my small body. Therefore, I need your help, please.

— Moayad

Dear Son,

I can imagine your position and feelings when your friends are harsh with you, but don't let this bother you too much. If you are eating healthy food, perhaps you need to increase the amount. Visit a doctor for a check-up, to make sure you

are medically fit. If you are, then just try to accept yourself as you are.

Be happy about who you are and what you do. Live a good life and be good to others. Your friends will soon realise that people are judged by their character and behaviour and not by their looks and they will accept you as you are.

Take care.

Hello! My name is Ahmed and I am 16 years old. I have a serious problem; I use the Internet for the whole day. I can't stop it and I can't study. I don't know what to do.

— Ahmed



	Corporate		Ministry of Education		Design & Layout
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