

文訊

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✧ 搏人記 ✧

泥巴隨處可見，任人踐踏，從來跟高貴掛不上鉤。罵人沒出息，是“爛泥扶不上牆”；比喻無用之物，是“泥豬瓦狗”。《紅樓夢》中賈寶玉甚至說：“女兒是水作的骨肉，男人是泥作的骨肉。我見了女兒，我便清爽；見了男子，便覺濁臭逼人。”然而，在世界各地的神話傳說裏，造物者用來創造人類的，正是這輕賤平凡之物。

在中國，女媧“搏（音“團”）土造人”的神話故事可謂家喻戶曉。《太平御覽》引《風俗通義》云：“俗說天地開闢，未有人民，女媧搏黃土作人，劇務，力不暇供，乃引繩於緇泥中，舉以為人。故富貴者黃土人也，貧賤凡庸者緇人也。”盤古開天闢地後，身體各部分化為大千世界，唯獨沒有人。女媧依照自己的樣子用黃土造人，大費氣力。無奈大地廣袤，小泥人造了一批又一批，還是顯得人丁單薄。女媧乾脆拿起繩子，沾上泥漿，再用力一甩，抖落一地的泥漿便成了一個個活蹦亂跳的小人兒。黃土捏成的比較精緻，是富人貴胄；泥漿甩成的比較粗糙，是百姓黎民。後來女媧又創立嫁娶之禮，人類就此世代繁衍生息。

希臘神話中，普羅米修斯與伊比米修斯兄弟二人奉宙斯之命，帶着各種恩賜下凡，創造萬物。普羅米修斯用泥土混着河水，照着天神的模樣捏出人形，又借智慧女神雅典娜之口吹送神靈的氣息，賦予泥人生命和靈魂。可是伊比米修斯行事魯莽，把忠誠、勤勞、聰明、敏捷等天賦分贈各種動物，人類卻一無所有。沒有尖牙利爪的弱者，怎能與野獸對抗呢？為了彌補弟弟的過失，普羅米修斯盜取天火送給凡人，結果被宙斯鎖在懸崖上，受盡折磨。從古希臘到文藝復興以至今日，在藝術作品裏都能看到這位英雄的身影。

女媧和普羅米修斯第一次造人就成功了，有些神祇卻要從失敗中學習。美洲大陸上的印加人相信，世界尚是一片混沌黑暗時，天神

維拉科查用石頭雕刻出一個巨人民族。巨人族力大無窮，可是性情暴虐，對神明毫無敬畏之心，於是維拉科查發動大洪水施以懲罰。洪水退去後，只有兩人倖存，其他族人全部變成石像。維拉科查汲取教訓，改用泥土造人，並向人類傳授了語言、農耕技術等生存所需的知識。

西非尼日利亞的約魯巴族流傳着這樣的傳說：天神奧羅倫指派奧巴塔拉開闢大地，見他辦事妥當，便再委以造人重任。奧巴塔拉下凡後便開始搏土造人，辛勤幹活。忌妒奧巴塔拉的艾蘇趁他疲憊口渴，暗中使壞，讓他喝下棕櫚酒。奧巴塔拉帶着醉意造出來的泥人，有的歪鼻，有的瞎眼。他酒醒後愧疚不已，立誓守護他們，從此成為殘疾人的保護神。

大地厚德載物，土生木，木生花，花生果，這可能就是先民相信人類源於泥土的原因。令人意想不到的是，這些故事向來被視為無稽之談，科學研究結果卻顯示未必盡然。二零一三年，美國康奈爾大學發表報告，指地球上的生命可能來自泥土。研究人員發現，黏土吸收水分後形成水凝膠，像海綿一樣吸收液體。數十億年間，水凝膠內各種化學物質之間產生非常複雜的生化反應，形成蛋白質、脫氧核糖核酸(DNA)等，為活細胞發育提供理想環境。科學家更提出證據，指按照地質歷史判斷，黏土首次出現之際，正是生物分子形成類似細胞的結構之時。科學家下一步將繼續探究黏土水凝膠與生命的關係。

人從哪裏來？又往哪裏去？從古至今都是人類苦思冥想的大哉問。無論是神話故事，還是科學研究，都在努力回答這些不解之謎。若誠如泰戈爾在《飛鳥集》說：“神從創造中找到自己”，那麼即使這些尋找人類起源的努力都是徒然，人類仍可以從不斷的探索中找到生命的意義。





Love at First Line

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a voracious reader in possession of a large to-be-read pile must be in want of a new book. She goes to a bookshop, picks a title off a shelf, scans the blurb on the back, opens the cover, and reads the first line ...

The opening line is arguably the most important sentence of a book. It is the first opportunity for authors to entice the reader into a world of their own creation. In a collection of his essays on literature, *The Story Begins*, Amos Oz writes, "Beginning to tell a story is like making a pass at a total stranger in a restaurant." In the right hands, a book's beginning alone can make you feel like falling in love at first sight. Your heart starts racing as you feel excited for all the possibilities to come.

From the pithy to the prescient, incipits come in all varieties. There are the philosophical ones, for instance, that are thought-provoking and intriguing in their certainty:

If I have learned anything in this long life of mine, it is this: In love we find out who we want to be; in war we find out who we are.

— *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah

Those that make the hair on the back of your neck tingle:

When I think of my wife, I always think of the back of her head.

— *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn

Those that amuse you:

The human race, to which so many of my readers belong, has been playing at children's games from the beginning, and will probably do it till the end, which is a nuisance for the few people who grow up.

— *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* by G. K. Chesterton

Those that capture a protagonist's unique voice:

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.

— *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger

Those that ground readers in the theme of a novel:

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

— *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

Those that use absurdity as a springboard for curiosity:

Every summer Lin Kong returned to Goose Village to divorce his wife, Shuyu.

— *Waiting* by Ha Jin

And those that challenge the reader:

If you are interested in stories with happy endings, you would be better off reading some other book.

— *The Bad Beginning* by Lemony Snicket

So what are the best opening lines in fiction? Every bibliophile has his or her favourite ones. After all, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Yet there are certain sentences that catch more eyes. Below are the top five openings chosen by 2,000 British book lovers in a poll last year as the most iconic opening lines from the world of literature.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

— *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.

— *1984* by George Orwell

All children, except one, grow up.

— *Peter Pan* by J. M. Barrie

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.

— *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien

Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much.

— *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J. K. Rowling

Often setting the tone for all that follows, always captivating readers from the outset, these first lines give a great opening to the equally great novels. Long after we have closed the book, the brilliant beginning of the story is still fresh in our minds. We should not judge a book by its cover, but we may, sometimes, judge it by its opening line.

All great deeds and all great thoughts have a ridiculous beginning.

Albert Camus

人生起跑線

中國人有句老話：“三歲看大，七歲看老。”無獨有偶，西方也有類似的說法：“Give me a child until he is seven and I will show you the man.”人的未來，真的在七歲就註定了嗎？英國紀錄片《成長系列》(Up Series)交出發人深省的答案。

一九六四年，英國電視台播放一部名為 *Seven Up!* 的紀錄片，專訪十四個來自不同地區、不同階層的七歲小孩，從而探討英國根深柢固的階級問題。節目一開始便指出：“我們把這些孩子帶到鏡頭前，為的是一窺英倫二零零零年的模樣。那時候的工人代表和行政主管，在這刻才不過七歲而已。”

紀錄片開始不久，觀眾便能感受到強烈的階級差異。這邊廂衣履光鮮的私校生學習拉丁文、鋼琴、芭蕾舞，那邊廂蓬頭垢面的窮小子打架打得不亦樂乎。富貴三人組說起升學之路頭頭是道，兒童院的孩子卻連什麼是大學也不知道。鏡頭下，階級壁壘分明，到二零零零年，誰是工人代表，誰是行政主管，似乎已有跡可尋。

米高瓦德 (Michael Apted) 在拍攝 *Seven Up!* 時只是個初出茅廬的大學畢業生，負責物色受訪者。七年後，他靈機一動，再度追蹤當年那些孩子的近況，推出 *7 Plus Seven*。自此，他每隔七年便去追訪拍攝。紀錄片至今已推出九輯，最新一輯是二零一九年推出的 *63 Up*。

七歲、十四歲、二十一歲……一直至六十三歲，觀眾在熒光幕前見證一眾主人公的大半生。他們的人生軌跡大多按着上天分派的劇本展開：富家子弟憑藉環境優勢和自身努力，入讀牛津、劍橋，畢業後從事體面的工作；窮苦孩子則早早輟學，在社會底層打滾，有的甚至要靠救濟金度日。

階級鴻溝真的無法跨越嗎？尼克住在約克郡谷地，每天上學要走四英里路，夢想是探索月球的奧秘。在 *7 Plus Seven* 中，他戴着厚厚的眼鏡，一直把腦袋埋在褲襠裏迴避鏡頭。誰想到這個笑容靦腆的農村小孩後來考上牛津，還去了美國當物理學教授，憑知識改變命運。

人生拐了一個大彎的，還有尼爾。尼爾生於教師家庭，小時候活潑開朗，志願是當太空人或旅遊車司機，後來牛津

沒考上，他大受打擊，大學讀了不到一年便輟學。*21 Up* 的製作組找到他時，他正在倫敦的工地打散工，後來拿着救濟金，搭便車到處流浪。他埋怨父母專制強橫，沒有聆聽和尊重他的想法，也沒有教他如何面對殘酷的現實。尼爾的故事告訴我們，孩子最需要的可能不是贏在起跑線上，而是學會承受挫折和失敗，即使逆風而行，仍能昂首挺胸，邁步奔前。

《成長系列》合共九輯十六集，長逾半個世紀的光陰壓縮成一千分鐘，讓人對“流年似水，浮生若夢”這句話有更深刻的體會。一個個天真爛漫的小孩，上一分鐘還對着鏡頭嘰嘰喳喳大談將來，轉眼便踏足社會，漸漸磨平了棱角。鏡頭再轉，青年已成中年，有人初嘗迎接新生命的喜悅，也有人開始面對失去至親的悲傷。眾人臉上都增添了歲月的痕跡，也對生活有了更深的感悟。

當時間幅度拉長到六十三年，階級不再顯得那麼重要，另一個更恢弘深遠的主題——人生——冉冉浮現。

每個人的人生都獨一無二。成功與否，幸福與否，除了自己，還有誰可以判定？東尼首次亮相就摔了個大馬趴，但很快就重新站起來，繼續奔跑。在往後的日子，他也曾多次跌倒，當騎師、做演員、開酒吧，屢戰屢敗，屢敗屢戰，笑容依然燦爛。琳恩在倫敦東區長大，兒時願望是在超級市場工作，長大後當了一輩子兒童圖書管理員。雖然這份工作不受重視，但她始終充滿熱誠。布魯斯從小悲天憫人，在牛津數學系畢業後，便赴公立學校任教，實踐理想，到中年才轉投待遇較佳的私校，改善家人生活。混血兒西蒙離開兒童院後與生母同住，長大後在凍肉廠工作，退休後成為寄養家長，前後照顧了百多個孩子，讓他們得到自己從未感受過的父愛。每位受訪者，不論出身起點，都各自活出精彩人生。

《成長系列》獲譽為有史以來最偉大的紀錄片，不僅是因為影片呈現了英國社會數十年來的變遷，更重要的是受訪者的經歷揭示了生命的無常與脆弱、人生的複雜與局限。若問歷盡千帆，倥偬半生，當初那個赤子還在嗎？六十三歲的尼克給予觀眾肯定的回答：“沒錯，我依舊是那個小孩，也許我們都是。”





Gweilo, the Golden Boy

Shortly after being diagnosed with an incurable brain tumour in 2002, British novelist and poet Martin Booth dedicated himself to writing a memoir for his children, who wished to know more about their father's early life. His last work, *Gweilo: A Memoir of a Hong Kong Childhood*, is an engaging and intimate account of his memorable days in a city which he would eventually call home.

In June 1952, seven-year-old Booth arrived in Hong Kong with his parents after his father, a supplies clerk attached to the Royal Navy, was offered a three-year posting. At the welcome lunch upon the family's arrival, the little boy met a naval officer who introduced him to prawns and Coca Cola and, more importantly, gave him a word of advice. "So long as you are in Hong Kong," said the officer, "whenever someone offers you something to eat, accept it." Booth duly obliged, accepting not only such weird delicacies as preserved eggs and stir-fried water beetles, but also a culture alien to him.

This sense of acceptance was fostered by his mother, "a humanist at heart who believed no man should lord it over another" in Booth's words. Unlike many of her fellow expatriates, she was very willing to engage with locals, and took her son to the wilds of the New Territories and outlying islands. Contrary to his vivacious mother who readily embraced the culture and beauty of the place, his bigoted father remained detached and resolutely standoffish, making little effort to understand the city or its people.

Booth went to Kowloon Junior School, but his real education took place outside the classroom. Since his blonde hair was "considered by the Chinese to be the colour of gold and therefore likely to impart wealth or good fortune", Booth was able to charm his way through every nook and cranny of the city. He made friends with people from all walks of life, and encountered a colourful array of characters—from Nagasaki Jim, who became a prisoner of

war at the fall of Hong Kong in 1941, to the deranged Russian tramp who was dubbed "the Queen of Kowloon". The streets were his "patch" and "playground". During a bold adventure in the notorious and lawless Kowloon Walled City, Booth was confronted by a triad gangster called Ho. With great composure, the streetwise kid held his hand out and introduced himself in Cantonese. As unlikely as it might seem, the two became acquaintances. In the following excursions, Booth was given private tours of the enclave and even visited an opium den.

While befriending rickshaw coolies, hotel workers and gang members, the golden boy also attended beach parties and enjoyed afternoon tea at The Peninsula, flitting freely between both worlds. "A good memoir," asserts literary critic William Zinsser, "is also a work of history, catching a distinctive moment in the life of both a person and a society." Through the curious eyes of a child, readers can witness the social and geopolitical upheavals of turbulent times, such as the Shek Kip Mei fire, the Korean War and the influx of refugees from Mainland China. Booth's personal narrative adds depth and tactility to the events he recalled, enabling readers to appreciate both the larger historical context and the cultural milieu that shaped Hong Kong in the 1950s. His love and fascination for Hong Kong is palpable. And his description is so vivid and powerful that the spirit of the city comes across on every single page.

The book closes with the Booths boarding the ship back to England, but their story did not end there. Four years later when Booth's father accepted a new job, the family returned and stayed until Booth completed his secondary education. His formative years in the city left an indelible imprint on his heart and coloured much of his subsequent works. His first best-seller *Hiroshima Joe* is inarguably based on the story of Nagasaki Jim. Not only are a few of his novels set in Hong Kong, his non-fiction books *Opium: A History* and *The Dragon Syndicates: The Global Phenomenon of the Triads* are also apparently inspired by his adventurous experiences in the Walled City. It seems home is more than a geographical location. It is a place associated with the most special memories of our lives and the connections we have made with others. "If the truth be told," Booth writes in the Author's Note of *Gweilo*, "I have never really left Hong Kong."

All glory comes from daring to begin.

Eugene Fitch Ware

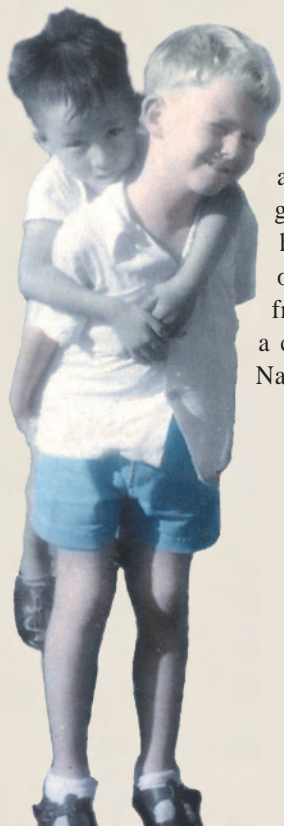


Photo credit:

(top) Lands Department, HKSARG

(bottom left) Martin Booth / *Gweilo: A Memoir of a Hong Kong Childhood*



見面禮



在家人的期盼中，小寶寶帶着哭聲降臨人間。這些粉雕玉琢的娃娃是育嬰室護士口中的 308C、312D，直到又喜又憂的父母把寶寶抱在懷裏，輕喚其名，小生命才真正擁有自己的身分。

名字，是父母送給子女的第一份禮物。人生於世，有如俠士仗劍江湖，必須有個響噹噹的好名，方能行走四方。對於素未謀面的陌生人，第一印象往往來自名字。“秉仁”令人想到敦厚有德的君子，而“曉蘭”則可能是個清雅秀氣的姑娘。不過，名字讓人浮想聯翩，對其主人來說也是一種壓力。《倚天屠龍記》中的張翠山，自從得到“銀鈎鐵劃”這個外號後，生怕名不副實，於是潛心苦練書法。

張愛玲在《必也正名乎》一文中說過：“為人取名字是一種輕便的，小規模的創造。”人工智能技術發展日趨成熟，創作彷彿變得毫不費力。簡單發送幾個指令，須臾之間聊天機械人即可匯出數百個起名建議。然而，取名字不光是一種創造，更是一份祝福。所謂心誠則靈，假手於人工智能，始終有點兒戲。於是，為人父母者即使平日看不了幾頁書便夢會周公，也開始老老實實地翻開字典，追古溯源，了解字詞的緣起、涵義和文化象徵，認真程度恐怕連文字學家也瞠乎其後。如此煞費苦心，往往瓜熟蒂落，甚至到寶寶滿了仍猶豫不決，不得不掏錢延後辦理姓名登記手續。

名字要優雅脫俗，引經據典應是穩妥做法。詩人白居易名字源出《禮記·中庸》：“君子居易以俟命”，意為君子安居現狀以待天命。翻譯家許淵沖之名出自老子《道德經》第四章：“道沖而用之或不盈。淵兮似萬物之宗。”有些父母則愛用偶像的名字給寶寶起名，以示景仰，更期望小寶貝長大後同樣優秀。宋代詞人秦觀的父親在太學讀書時，結識了同窗王觀，仰慕其才，便為兒子取名“觀”。秦觀後來不負父親期許，寫下不少佳詞妙句，時人把他和王觀合稱為“二觀”。此外，以出生地起名也十分常見。梁廷煒屬故宮博物院最早一批工作人員，抗戰時期，他和兒子押運故宮文物南遷，沿路出生的孫兒孫女——峨生、嘉生、金生、寧生、燕生——皆以國寶所到之地命名。這也可算是“就地取材”。

取名時，連名帶姓一同構思，另有一番趣味。明朝巨富安國生七子，名為如山、如磐、如石、如岳、如京、如岡、如陵，一家子穩穩當當。作家陳若曦丈夫姓段，她從街頭標語“鍛煉身體，保衛祖國”取得靈感，為長子取名為“段煉”，期望他認真生活。這些都是與姓氏相配的好名字。反之，若一時不慎，名字與姓氏構成滑稽的歧義詞或諧音詞，可就大事不妙了。電影《九品芝麻官》中，主角向“吳廣德”、“吳好緹”兩兄妹請教大名的情節，令人忍俊不禁。這些名字在虛構情節出現，或可博得觀眾一粲，但用於現實生活，說不定會令孩子終身蒙上陰影。因此，在力求名字平仄諧協、鏗鏘悅耳之餘，恐怕也要連名帶姓反覆多唸幾次，以免孩子淪為笑柄。

不少人相信，姓名影響一生運勢。有謂“姓名二三字，好壞一輩子”，父母想到孩子一輩子的禍福，可能繫乎一二字的抉擇，自然不敢怠慢。有人不惜一擲千金，厚聘精通術數的高人為孩子取名，視乎命中五行所欠所缺，用名字來補足，化凶為吉。姓名吉凶這回事，作家簡嫻看得豁達。她在散文集《紅嬰仔》寫下替兒子命名的感悟：“名字，亦是世間相之一，可執可不執，執時若五花大綁，不執則自在逍遙。……用中文名字的光是兩岸三地十三億，……這麼多名字，吉能吉到哪兒，凶又凶到何處呢？”她按自己心意，為兒子取名“姚遠”，希望他“這一生走得天寬地闊，從他手中抖開的路，能高能遠”。

名字這個世間相，執還是不執，不妨看看這段軼事再作判斷。上世紀三十年代初，上海有個姓張的女孩小名叫“煥”，因父親反對而不能上學。張太太背着丈夫替女兒報讀小學，填寫入學證時，覺得“張煥”聽起來不甚響亮，於是暫用洋名“Eileen”音譯，填上“張愛玲”三個字。張愛玲說自己的名字惡俗不堪，卻因為母親留下的這段回憶而始終不願改掉。

莎士比亞說：“玫瑰不叫玫瑰，依然芳香如故。”正為孩子起名搜索枯腸的父母，或可從張愛玲得到啓迪：人生順逆，從來無關名字雅俗。與其說名字是個護身符，助人趨吉避凶，倒不如說是份見面禮，印證舐犢情深。這份不帶目的、不求回報的禮物，如同父母的恩情一樣，在悠悠歲月中與我們相依相伴，同行一生。

每清晨都該恢復為一個“初人”，每一刻，都要維護住那一片初心。

張曉風《初心》

原來如此

“出爾反爾”本義是一報還一報？“空穴來風”其實是指事出有因？“慘綠少年”是形容青年才俊風度翩翩？沒想到吧！這些成語，起初原來是這個意思！

出爾反爾

“出爾反爾”出自《孟子·梁惠王下》。戰國時期，鄒魯兩國交戰，鄒國官員死了三十三人，卻沒有一個老百姓肯效死。鄒穆公很糾結：殺了這些見死不救的百姓吧，又殺不了這麼多；不殺吧，又難解心頭之恨。於是，他問策於孟子。孟子告訴他，鄒國百姓之所以如此，是因為饑荒時餓殍遍野，明明國庫充裕、糧倉充實，這些官吏卻瞞上欺下，對災情視若無睹。孟子接着引述曾子的話告誡鄒穆公：“戒之戒之！出乎爾者，反乎爾者也。”“爾”相當於“你”，而“反”通“返”。因此，“出爾反爾”的本義是：你怎麼對待別人，別人也會怎麼對待你。

范仲淹《竇諫議錄》云：“陰陽之理，大抵不異，為善為惡，出爾反爾，天網恢恢，疏而不漏。”乾隆年間編纂的《四庫全書總目提要》這樣評介經學家毛奇齡：“引證浩博，喜於詰駁，其攻擊先儒最甚。而盛氣所激，出爾反爾，其受攻擊亦最甚。”“出爾反爾”在以上二例中，意思都是一報還一報。

到了晚清，“出爾反爾”的詞義已演變為“言行前後矛盾，反覆無常”，例如《官場現形記》第五十九回：“倘若不肯，也只好由他，我不能做出爾反爾的事。”這個用法沿用至今，本義已為人淡忘。

空穴來風

“空穴來風”語出戰國時楚國宋玉的《風賦》：“枳句來巢，空穴來風。其所託者然，則風氣殊焉。”此處“空”通“孔”，“空穴”指孔洞。宋玉這幾句話的意思是：枳樹枝極彎曲會引來鳥兒築巢，有孔洞便會有風吹進來，萬事萬物各有依託，氣勢自然不同。有“空（孔）”自然招風，因此“空穴來風”用來比喻事出有因。

然而，“空”在現代漢語並無“孔洞”的含義，人們大多把“空穴來風”的“空”理解為“憑空”或“空蕩蕩”，並以“空穴來風”形容“消息和傳言無中生有，毫無根據”。

有別於“出爾反爾”，“空穴來風”的原義仍未完全消失，只是後面一般加上“事必有因”、“事出有因”等語。一些辭典只收錄新義，一些則把原義和新義兼收並蓄。以《現代漢語辭典》為例，在前四版中，“空穴來風”的釋義為“比喻消息和傳說不是完全沒有原因的”，自第五版起補充說明“現多用來比喻消息和傳說毫無根據”。

慘綠少年

“慘綠少年”典出唐代張固《幽閒鼓吹》記載的一段軼聞。唐德宗時，潘孟陽初任戶部侍郎，潘母深恐兒子才不配位，反惹禍殃，於是着兒子在家設宴招待同僚。潘母在簾後觀察，發現來賓與孟陽資質相若，獨有一人不同，宴罷便向兒子問道：“末座慘綠少年何人也？”孟陽答說是補闕杜黃裳。她說：“此人全別，必是有名卿相。”這位氣宇不凡的少年，後來從區區諫官晉升至宰相。潘老夫人果然獨具慧眼。

“慘”在古代通“黧”，指暗淡的顏色，例如“慘淡經營”本指畫家構圖時先用淺淡顏色勾勒輪廓。“慘綠少年”原指穿淺綠色衣服的少年，後引申指風度翩翩的青年。時至今日，不少人用“慘綠少年”來形容彷徨的少年或迷茫的青春。不過，這些新義目前並未廣見於辭書，日後能否成為規範，尚未可知。

君子慎始。差若毫釐，謬以千里。

《周易》

“出爾反爾”、“空穴來風”和“慘綠少年”代表成語在語言發展過程中的三種狀態。當成語的用法改變，甚至與本義截然不同時，應該正本清源還是從俗如流？習非成是的盡頭又是否約定俗成？差利卓別靈說：“時間是最偉大的作者，總能寫出完美的結局。”也許我們可以把語言文字交付時間，讓這個偉大的作者給我們最好的答案。



NUMERICAL PREFIXES

Prefixes, usually of Latin and Greek origin, are placed at the beginning of a word to modify its meaning. Those relating to numbers are called numerical prefixes. Below is a table of some of the prefixes for one to ten:

Prefix(es)	Meaning	Prefix(es)	Meaning
uni- / mono-	one	sex- / hexa-	six
bi- / du(o)- / di-	two	sept(em)-	seven
tri-	three	oct(o)-	eight
quadr-	four	nove(m)- / nona-	nine
penta- / quin(que)-	five	dec(em)- / deca-	ten

Numerical prefixes can help you make an educated guess at unfamiliar words. Take the word **dilemma** as an example. Starting with the prefix *di-*, it describes a situation in which one must choose between two options. You should then be able to figure out the meaning of **trilemma**, which refers to a quandary in which a tough choice has to be made among three alternatives rather than two.

Numerical prefixes can also be found in adjectives about frequency of occurrence, such as **biennial** and **triennial**, which mean recurring every two and three years respectively. **Biannual** and **triannual**, on the other hand, mean occurring twice and three times a year respectively. Different numerical prefixes can be used to form words with similar meanings, such as **quadrennial** (recurring every four years), **quinquennial** (happening every five years) and **decennial** (occurring every ten years).

The prefix *bi-* often trips people up because it can either mean “occurring twice” or “once every two”. Therefore, **biweekly** can be “twice a week” or “every two weeks”. **Bimonthly** can be “twice a month” or “every two months”. To avoid the confusion, it is better to use more precise expressions or leave some clues in your context to indicate which meaning is being referred to.

In writing, there are specific terms for age groups by decade. A person aged between 60 and 69 is sometimes called a **sexagenarian**. Likewise, the word **septuagenarian** refers to someone in their seventies, while **octogenarian** refers to a person aged 80 to 89.

A glance at the prefixes for seven to ten may leave you puzzled about the names of months: Shouldn't **September**, **October**, **November** and **December** be the seventh to tenth months in a calendar year? In fact, they used to be. Originally there were only ten months on the Roman calendar, with March being the first month of the year and December the tenth. Later January was added to the beginning and February to the end of the calendar to name the winter months and create the 12-month year. In 452 BC, February was moved to its current position between January and March. September to December, the seventh to tenth months, were thus pushed down and became the ninth to twelfth months. Their prefixes, however, remained unchanged.



1. 問：“復原”還是“復元”？

答：“復原”指“恢復原狀”或“病後或傷後恢復健康”；“復元”專指“傷病後恢復元氣”。使用“復原”還是“復元”，視乎文意而定。如電腦系統故障後回復正常，應寫“復原”；病人調養後元氣恢復，寫“復元”或“復原”均可。

2. 問：“緣於”還是“源於”？

答：兩者表達的意思並不相同。“源”的本義是“水起頭的地方”，泛指事物的起頭和來處。“源於”一般用作表達“來自於”的意思，例如“‘黑客’一詞源於英語”。“緣”除指人與人之間的交集外，主要字義是“起因”、“原由”。“緣於”一般用作表達因果關係，例如“二疊紀末生物大滅絕緣於溫室效應”。

3. 問：“嘗”和“嚐”有何分別？

答：“嘗”是本字，本義是辨別滋味，後引申為“吃、試探、經歷、曾經”等義。“嚐”是“嘗”的分化字，專指“辨別滋味、食用”。因此，“嘗”與“嚐”在“以口辨味”這個義項上相通，例如可寫“品嚐咖啡”或“品嚐咖啡”。如所指的是經歷，則應用“嘗”，例如“初嘗敗績”。

4. 問：“序言”和“獻辭”有何分別？

答：“序”是開頭的意思。“序言”是正文之前的文章，多用於文學作品或學術著作，由作者說明成書經過，或由他人介紹書的內容。“獻辭”則指“祝賀的話或文字”，通常放在紀念刊物最前位置。政府刊物的獻辭可由主辦活動的官員撰寫，感謝各界的支持，亦可由其他部門的官員或社會賢達撰寫，表達祝賀之意。



詞源探義

本期《原來如此》一文簡述了數個成語的詞義演變。原來，很多常見字詞的古今涵義亦大有不同。快來回答以下問題，看看你能否認出這些字詞的本來面目。

- “市儈”現指唯利是圖的人，在古代指什麼人？
 - 買賣中間人
 - 廚子
 - 僕役
 - 劊子手
- 《三國志·吳志·魯肅傳》載，孫權諸將皆勸他依附曹操，“而肅獨不言。權起更衣，肅追於宇下。”“更衣”在此作何解？
 - 加衣服
 - 喬裝打扮
 - 穿鎧甲
 - 上廁所
- “小心翼翼”語出《詩經》，原義是什麼？
 - 態度恭敬
 - 心思細密
 - 小心眼兒
 - 畏首畏尾
- “大駕”一詞現今是通用的敬稱，但在古代只可用來尊稱誰？
 - 皇帝
 - 皇太子
 - 王族
 - 公卿大臣
- 成語“七月流火”的原義是什麼？
 - 七月流星多若煙火
 - 天氣開始轉涼
 - 天氣炎熱
 - 七月水旺火衰
- “睡覺”一詞，在以下哪句詩中解作“睡醒”？
 - 雲鬢半偏新睡覺，花冠不整下堂來。
 - 閒來無事不從容，睡覺東窗日已紅。
 - 晚涼睡覺欲何之，散步徜徉曲沼西。
 - 睡覺花陰芳草軟，不知明月出牆東。
 - (iv)
 - (i)和(iv)
 - (ii)和(iii)
 - 全部皆是
- “爪牙”現指壞人的黨羽，但在古代可解作勇士、武臣。以下哪句中的“爪牙”帶褒義？
 - 戰克之將，國之爪牙，不可不重也。
 - 外以奉王命為辭，內實理車甲，招賓客，樹爪牙。
 - 股肱惰而萬事荒，爪牙亡而四國亂。
 - (i)
 - (i)和(iii)
 - (ii)和(iii)
 - 全部皆是
- 《後漢書》“忠孝之人，持心近厚；鍛鍊之吏，持心近薄”一句中，“鍛鍊”該作何解？
 - 努力不懈
 - 深諳律法
 - 妄加罪狀
 - 處事因循

請在二零二四年五月三十日前，把答案連同個人資料傳真至 2521 8772 或電郵至 csbolrs@csb.gov.hk。答對問題者可獲書券一張，名額十個。答案及得獎者名單將於下期公布（答案以《文訊》公布者為準）。

姓名：_____ 先生／女士（請刪去不適用者）
 部門：_____ 職位：_____
 電話：_____ 電郵：_____



Not-a-Mindboggler

Solution of Issue No. 94

- William Shakespeare
- Ernest Hemingway
- Dr Seuss
- Auld Lang Syne
- Hans Christian Andersen
- 22 September
- Samuel Johnson
- Bloomsday

The following winners will be notified individually by email:

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Kuang Jian-feng	C&SD	Wong Tsz-yan	LCSD
Lam Yin-cho	DH	Yung Pui-ki	ArchSD

二零二四年七月第九十六期主題：最後

Issue No. 96 (July 2024) : Ending

二零二四年十月第九十七期主題：未完待續

Issue No. 97 (October 2024) : To Be Continued

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