

<b>Headline</b>	Fix that sign : Here are the winners		
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<b>Description</b>	These are 3 winners who contributed the top 3 signs which were voted by the public in Stomp's inaugural Fix-That-Sign contest.		

## Fix that sign: Here are the winners

BY KENNETH TAN

**A** BRIGHT-RED sign outside a Tampines kopitiam reads: "After Midnight self-service".

Public signs like this with incorrect use of English, which was spotted by student Joel Hoon, are the reason why Stomp and the Speak Good English Movement organised the Fix That Sign contest.

The contest had Singaporeans hunting and snapping photographs of poorly-worded and ungrammatical signs all over the country.

Participants also had to propose suitable corrections to the mistakes they found.

Three prizes were awarded: A Lenovo netbook, a Nokia mobile phone and a Canon digital camera for the first, second and third prizes.

Over 400 entries were received in the three-month contest. These were featured in the English As It Is Broken section in Stomp, which answers readers' questions about the use of the English language.

Although the contest ended on Dec 13, Singaporeans are still sending pictures of incorrect signs to Stomp, demonstrating the competition's effectiveness in raising awareness.

Ten entries – with clear errors and good fixes – were shortlisted for the voting phase from Nov 1 to Dec 13. Over 10,000 votes were cast.

Three entries stood out clearly from the rest.

Joel Hoon's top-placed sign "After Midnight Self-Service" was spotted outside a 24-hour eatery in Tampines Avenue 4, when he was dining with his parents.

His entry features a common mistake made by many Singaporean English speakers – that of importing sentence structure from the Chinese or other languages.

Said the 14-year-old Pasir Ris Secondary School student: "There are many signs with similar errors in Singapore, especially in the heartland."

Joel's entry garnered 3,600 votes, more than a third of all votes cast.

In second place is 41-year-old Ahmad Mazhar Abu Bakar, who spotted a sign that said, "No Pet Are Allow".

To fix the sign, he suggested using the plural "pets" and changing "allow" to "allowed".



1ST PLACE: Joel Hoon's entry features a common English mistake made by many Singaporeans – that of borrowing the sentence structure of the Chinese language.



2ND PLACE: Ahmad Mazhar's entry features not one but two prominent errors.



3RD PLACE: Cara Ow selected her entry for its humour. (PHOTOS: STOMP)

An engineer, he felt that the contest was an excellent platform to educate the public on the effective use of English. It encouraged the public to be proactively involved in spotting and fixing English-language errors.

Fewer than 50 votes behind in third place is 12-year-old student Cara Ow, who took a photograph of a curiously-worded sign which states, "There Are

More Sitting At The Rear". This she corrected to "There Are More Seats At The Rear".

This sign was found at a coffee shop at the junction of Seah and Wallich streets.

When asked why she chose this particular sign to submit for the contest, she replied with a laugh: "The error is quite funny. I thought people would get a good laugh out of it."

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### HELPDESK 我的字典

**Ungrammatical:** 不合语法的  
bù hé yǔ fǎ de

**Shortlisted:**  
进入最后一轮候选名单  
jìn rù zuì hòu yī lún  
hòu xuǎn míng dān

**Heartland:** 邻里 lín lǐ

**Proactively:** 积极主动的  
jī jí zhǔ dòng de