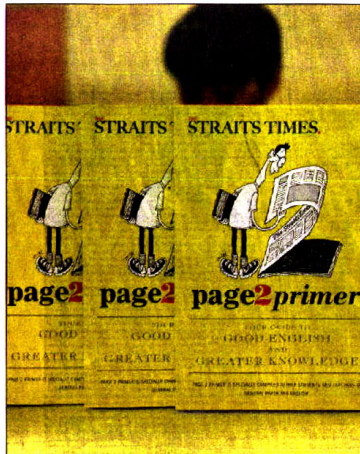
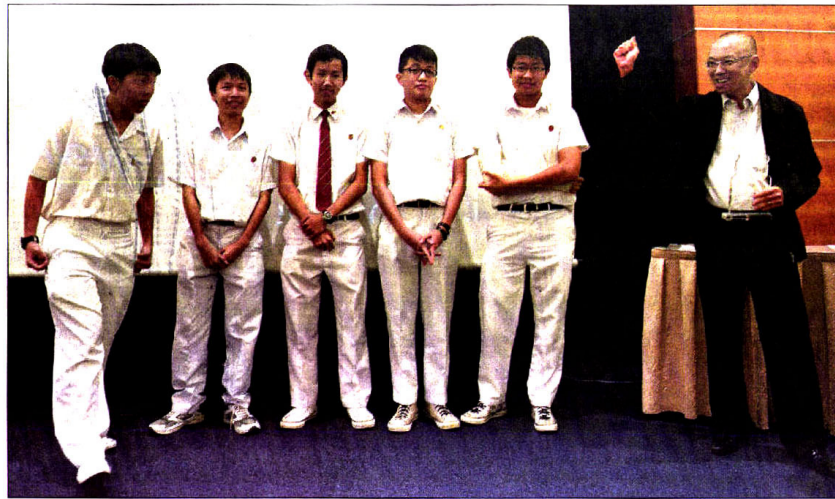


Headline	New book a Primer for better English		
Date	19 Nov 2009		
Media Title	The Straits Times	Section	Home
Page No.	Pg B08	Size	N.A.
Description	The Straits Times publishes Page 2 Primer, or P2P, which showcases some of the most outstanding works from the publication's best writers.		



Page 2 Primer is a collection of 25 commentaries written by Straits Times writers and published on Page 2 of the newspaper.



Raffles Institution's Tay Hui Chiang (left), 15, walks over to collect the top prize from Straits Times editor Han Fook Kwang. The RI team won in the ST National Schools Newspaper Competition with its entry (above). The team from Victoria School, (from second left) Lim Li Keen, Rifdi Rosly, Yeo Tze Yang and Daniel Ng, all 15, came in second. Third place went to CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School. ST PHOTOS: MUGILAN RAJASEGERAN

New book a Primer for better English

ST book also helps build general knowledge and develop critical thinking

By EISEN TEO

YOU could call it a greatest hits collection that should take pride of place on the bookshelves of English students.

Nestled within its 187 pages are 25 of the best commentaries that have appeared on Page 2 of The Straits Times over the last year or so.

But there is more. Besides insights on subjects such as the H1N1 virus and regional politics, the pages of a new book launched yesterday are filled with material for building general knowledge and a grasp of current affairs, as well as vocabulary building and critical thinking exercises.

Called Page 2 Primer, or P2P, the book was described by the newspaper's editor, Mr Han Fook Kwang, as an effort to showcase the outstanding work of The Straits Times' best writers.

At its launch at the Singapore Press Holdings News Centre yesterday, Mr Han said he came up with the idea because "we want to encourage students to read widely beyond their textbooks".

"There's no better daily reading experience than reading a newspaper like The Straits Times."

Meant for advanced English learners, P2P contains pieces penned by editors, senior journalists and foreign correspondents, along with editorial cartoons by Straits Times senior executive artist Miel and members of the art team.

The launch was part of The Straits Times Media Club Camp, a two-day event for students from secondary schools that subscribe to the newspaper.

During the camp, students visited the newsroom and tapped journalists' expertise, as well as got down to brass tacks at a press conference on climate change with MTV VJ and youth ambassador Denise Keller.

Another highlight of the camp was the award ceremony for the Straits Times National Schools Newspaper Competition, which was held two weeks ago.

Mr Han gave out prizes to winners of

the fifth annual event, which required the 10 teams that made the finals to put together a four-page tabloid in 24 hours.

Raffles Institution, which had previously lost to rivals Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road) and Victoria School, finally took the big prize this year.

RI bagged the top prize - the gold award of \$3,000 and an internship in The Straits Times newsroom - for the quality of its reporting.

The silver, and \$2,000, went to Victoria School, while CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School took the bronze and \$1,000.

Straits Times associate editor Bertha Henson, a judge for the competition, said the neophyte journalists impressed her with their clean designs and restrained use of colour.

She said: "Schools are beginning to understand that the aim of a newspaper is to be read and frills only affect a reader's ability to make sense of the articles."

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Schools interested in subscribing to the newspaper and its weekly publication for secondary schools, IN, can call Mr David Tan on 6319-1005 or e-mail circschool@sph.com.sg for details.

What's in the book

What's in P2P:

Twenty-five articles by editors and senior journalists from August last year to July this year, which first appeared as Page 2 commentaries in The Straits Times.

They cover a range of local and international issues, such as the quandary over Singapore's low birth rate and United States President Barack Obama's call for a nuclear-free world.

How teachers and students can use it:

Articles provide fodder for classroom discussion. A question could be something like this: "What would you consider as the chief right and obligation of a citizen?" Readers can work on comprehension questions and vocabulary building exercises, and read explanations of complex terms and metaphors.

There is also material for teaching history, politics and current affairs -

ideal for light reading or serious classroom work. All 25 commentaries were selected for their teaching potential.

Why commentaries in Page 2 of The Straits Times?

When The Straits Times was revamped in August last year, it was decided that the best commentary of the day would go on Page 2. Having it further forward in the paper, explained Straits Times editor Han Fook Kwang, ensured readers would not miss it.

"Commentaries are an important part of every newspaper," Mr Han said. "A good commentary helps the reader to understand the issue better, make him think about it and what it means for him and society as a whole."

Where to get it:

All major bookstores in Singapore, at \$20.20 (with GST).