

Kampong Spirit Kampong Fun

Village Life and Childhood Games in Singapore Revisited

Kampong Spirit, Kampong Fun is an exhibition that is a tribute to kampong life and childhood which now exists only as fond memories for the older generation. Kampongs or villages were rural settlements once common in Singapore. The living space, the unique way of life and the entertainment for children and adults were shared experiences of many, regardless of race and religion. The spirit of innovation and *gotong-royong* will always remain crucial to Singapore's continued progress as we overcome present challenges and attain greater achievements.

< for Primary School Students >

Educators' Guide



Education and
Community Outreach Division



About the exhibition

This exhibition is a tribute to kampong life and childhood which now exists only as fond memories for some.

Kampongs or villages were rural settlements once common in Singapore. The living space, the unique way of life and the entertainment for children and adults were shared experiences of many, regardless of race and religion.

In conceptualising this exhibition, NHB dug into the nation's "memory bank", as well as our own, to draw out the games and toys that people remembered their childhood days by - the elements and experiences that persisted in people's memory of their kampongs. These have translated into the various structures, exhibits, images and characters which you see in this exhibition.

To those who have had a taste of kampong life or played these traditional games as children, we hope that this exhibition brings back fond memories.

To the younger visitors who will find kampongs and "kampong games" totally unfamiliar, we hope this will be a journey of discovery to the joys of lives that the previous generations have experienced.

The kampong days are long gone. However, the spirit of innovation and *gotong-royong* will always remain crucial to Singapore's continued progress as we strive to overcome our present challenges and attain greater achievements.

Some examples of kampong activities:

Fishermen

Fishing was busy work – when the fishermen were not fishing, they were usually preparing for the next day's work such as mending nets or repairing their boats.

Weddings, Lunar New Year and Hari Raya were times when the entire kampong would be bustling with celebrations.

Fun Activities in a Kampong

The compound of a kampong house served as the children's playground where many traditional games were played. As public swimming pools were mainly located in town or near-town areas, kampong children would have their usual dips in the river or at sea. Climbing trees in the open fields, catching fish in the rivers and monsoon drains or longkang, hunting birds and insects or simply an afternoon idling away at the beach were the common pastimes of children in rural Singapore.



Key Concepts

You can connect *Kampong Spirit, Kampong Fun* to your curriculum using these key concepts. They convey the main educational themes of the exhibition.

The exhibition provides a platform for students to appreciate the past when life was simpler staying in kampongs, to understand the changing aspects of time and appreciate the importance of memory in history.

The kampong activities, games or leisure activities featured in this exhibition are relatable to the people that lived through the past and present alike. Some of these activities such as games have stood the test of time.

Students will get an opportunity to appreciate Singapore's early way of life, and provide a glimpse of the values of kampong spirit that was valued, that material goods are not overly pursued, and everyone was like one big family.



Understanding our history would allow a better understanding of the past and treasure the fruits enjoyed in the present.

Through the understanding of kampong history, students will be able to infer about the differences in the times past and present and understand that the previous generation, such as the Pioneer Generation, had different life experiences.

The stories challenge students to talk to the older generation about the past.

These anecdotes on kampong spirit can only spur conversation topics between the old and the young. This will provide teachers with the opportunity to integrate knowledge sharing into the lesson to educate students on the importance of conversations with the elderly, to understand that many of them once led lives like ours too! How about linking it with the present too? Our games on apps are like their old games too! Talk about them!



Pre-Exhibition Activities

Come Prepared

Review this guide prior to your visit to the exhibition. You may research for more information about Singapore's kampong life and stories about kampong spirit to share with your students.

Class Discussion

Before you visit the exhibition, let your students know that they will be able to learn about life in Singapore's kampongs in the past. Read aloud the write up that can be found in the "About the Exhibition" page to your students and discuss the Key Concepts with your students.

Ask them to write down their thoughts in the Pre-Exhibition Questions space!
If you wish to discuss more, consider using these questions!

What are some values from the older generation that your parents have taught you?

Do you know of other Singapore traditions and quirky kampong activities that you can share with the class?

Have you heard of any other stories of kampong life from your parents? If yes, do share with the class!



B MIX AND MATCH

Match each of the description on the left to the correct words on the right!

A _____ is used to store water and it is commonly shared by few households.

Many kampongs used _____ lamps for lighting.

Every morning a "_____ - soil" carrier removes the bucket below the toilet and replaces it with a new one.

A typical kampong house is often made of attap or _____ roof.

A typical Chinese rural house would have a _____ or *dui lian* on either side of the main door with auspicious sayings.

zinc

*couplet

kerosene

well

night



What is the meaning of couplet?

A couplet is a pair of lines that rhyme and are of the same length



C CHANGE

Life during the kampong days is different from the life we experience now. Write and draw how our lifestyles have changed overtime.

Then

Now

Housing

- Individual kampong houses
- Zinc or attap roofs
- Flooring is made of rubber or wood

- HDB flats – can be as high as 20 storeys
- Each floor consist of 4-6 units
- Flooring – parquet, laminate wood flooring, tiles etc

Schools

- Chalk board
- Wooden chairs and tables
- May or may not have fans

- White board
- Plastic chairs and tables
- Ceiling fans, aircon
- Computer labs
- Science labs
- Gym

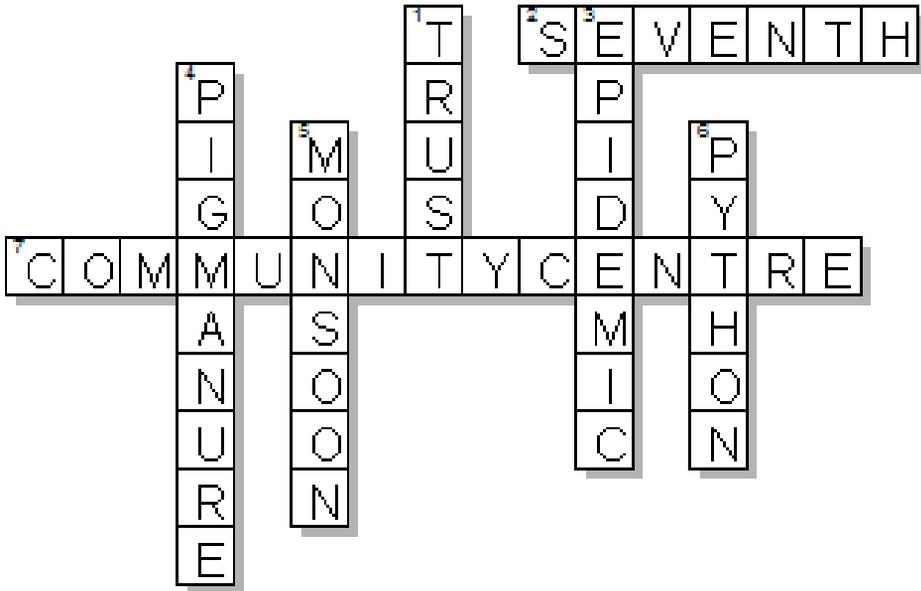
Water and Power Supply

- Water obtained for well or common pipes shared with the neighbours
- Kerosene lamps were used as lighs

- Each house has their own water and electrical supply
- LED lights to conserve power



D WORK, LEISURE AND WORSHIP



ACROSS

2 In which month do the Chinese Opera stage their performances?

7 Which venue was important in providing welfare to the residents after the Second World War?

DOWN

1 Shopkeepers extended "credit facilities" and accepted delayed payment when the customers had no cash. What value is shown here?

3 The greatest fear among the poultry farmers

4 The type of fertiliser used at the vegetable farm

5 Fishermen usually do not work during this period

6 A common intruder in a pig farm



E MY FAVOURITE KAMPONG GAME

Kampong games are simple, yet fun! Draw a simple poster on one kampong game to encourage your friends to try it!





F MY REFLECTIONS

Singapore has progressed into a modern society and has allowed us to live comfortably.

One important value we can take away from this exhibition is Gratitude – To be grateful with what we have now and not take them for granted.

What are some examples of things we should not take for granted?
Explain your answer.

- Water Supply: We get our water supply from Johor and there are contract which will expire.
- Electrical supply: The electrical supply comes from burning fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are non-renewable resources. This means that once exhausted, they are gone forever.

What was most memorable moment for you in this exhibition? Draw and write it in the space below!



Post-Exhibition Activities

Discuss These Questions with the Students!

Take some time in class to do either group discussions or as a mass class discussion to sum up the thinking concepts!

1. Why do you think older people like to reminisce about the past?
2. How similar or different is life today from the past?
3. Do you think these memories captured in the exhibition remain important in the lives of many Singaporeans?

Further Reading

In addition, you may wish to consider asking students to explore these websites to find out more!

Do give students encouragement after they have completed the worksheet!

To read up about memories from other Singaporeans about life in the past:
<http://www.singaporememory.sg/>

To read up about other Singapore's well remembered places that Singaporeans will enjoy:
<http://www.iremember.sg/>