

MEDIA RELEASE

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The 31st Speak Mandarin Campaign launches with a new Student Category for The Chinese Challenge – an online contest to promote Chinese as a living language.

6 July 2010 – The Speak Mandarin Campaign 2010 was officially launched today by Minister of Manpower, Mr Gan Kim Yong, as Guest-of-Honour at the launch held at the Asian Civilizations Museum. Mr. Gan also launched The Chinese Challenge 2010 website, an online contest aimed at increasing proficiency in the Chinese language as well as to deepen knowledge and appreciation of Chinese culture.

Speaking at the launch, Mr. Gan emphasized the need to embrace Mandarin as a living language and acquaint oneself with a Chinese culture that is growing in influence in the world.

New Student Category added to The Chinese Challenge

In line with this year's campaign objectives, a new student category has been created for The Chinese Challenge 2010 to especially target upper primary and secondary school students. This special category aims to be a fun and enjoyable learning resource that also encourages students to increase their proficiency in the Chinese language.

Making Chinese Fun and Relevant for All

The Chinese Challenge 2010 will also have an open category for the general public to participate in by logging on to www.thechinesechallenge.sg. This year, the contest will run for six weeks from the 6 July to 15 August and feature ten new questions every week.

Last year's contest garnered 15,000 participants and ongoing interest led to 6,000 questions submitted during a contest run on Omy.sg in January. Questions for The Chinese Challenge 2010 were handpicked from this pool of submissions, resulting in a contest truly designed by the public, for the public.

2009's finale attracted over 880,000 viewers and was ranked among Channel 8's top variety programme specials, and also won Best Variety Special at MediaCorp's Star Awards 2010.

To entice Singaporeans to participate, The Chinese Challenge 2010 is offering a top prize valued at \$10,000 jointly sponsored by Eu Yan Sang, Wotif.com and Jetstar Asia Pte Ltd. The Chinese Challenge 2010 finale will be broadcast on Channel 8 in September 2010.

Not Just a Contest but a Sustainable Initiative

In her third year as Chairperson for Speak Mandarin Campaign, Ms Lim Sau Hoong said, "We want the public to use The Chinese Challenge as an interactive and fun platform to enhance their learning experience with the Chinese language. Students can use the website to enrich their learning skills, teachers can use it for their lessons and grandparents and parents can use it as a family activity to bond with their grandchildren and children."

Ms Lim also said "The Chinese Challenge is more than a contest. It is a sustainable initiative that grows with time. The archive of questions and answers will be kept online and will evolve into a living database of Chinese language and culture that can be accessed for years to come."

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About Speak Mandarin Campaign 2010

This year marks the 31st anniversary of this nationwide campaign that was first launched in 1979 by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. The objective then was to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to use Mandarin instead of dialects. Over the years, the campaign has shifted its focus to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to both embrace speaking Mandarin and enjoy an appreciation for Chinese culture and language.