



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

ALIEN SAFETY

The alien spaceship landed right in the middle of the Padang.

"Take us to your leader... in work safety," said the two aliens when the authorities arrived.

The powers-that-be called upon Mr Rapi.

"Hi, I'm Mr Rapi. I'm head of the Occupational Safety and Health Division." Mr Rapi looked at the aliens from head to tentacle. "Why are you not wearing sanitation suits?"

The aliens looked at each other and said, "He's our man."

Their tentacles grabbed hold of Mr Rapi, and before anyone could react, Mr Rapi was bundled off into their spaceship.

"We're taking you to our planet," Alien#1 said. "We need you there."

In a flash, they were there.

"We have a problem," confessed Alien#2. "We can communicate with any species. We can travel throughout the universe in a flash. But our people are dying."

Mr Rapi was still reeling, disoriented.

"Somehow, our workers are dying by the hundreds. Right there, at their workplaces. We take pride in ensuring workplace safety. And yet, they die," said Alien#1.

"We've done our research. We know Singapore is one of the safest countries on Earth. That's why we came to you," said Alien#2.

"Okayyyyy," Mr Rapi said, trying to sound confident. "Let's have a look."

They went to all the worksites and offices. They even went to the workers' homes. Mr Rapi scrutinised everything. That's why he's called Mr Rapi.

"Anything?" asked Alien#1.

"Everything's in order," reported Mr Rapi. "Your work safety protocols are beyond reproach. Every work process is top-notch. However..."

The aliens leaned forward.

"Your workers are far from healthy," Mr Rapi surmised. "Look... by your standards, they're fat! You have automated everything. All your workers do is sit around and watch the machines go. That's unhealthy."

The aliens looked at each other.

"You even have a vending machine next to every worker!" Mr Rapi rapped. "And it's all junk food! You think you're taking care of your workers, but you're actually driving them to an early grave!"

"What's a grave?" asked Alien#1.

"Never mind," said Mr Rapi.

"So what should we do?" asked Alien#2.

"Good question," said Mr Rapi. "Replace every food dispensing machine with exercise machines instead. Let your workers walk to the canteen for food. Load the canteen with healthy food. Reward healthy employees. Hold health screening tests at work. Create a team that will look at healthy and unhealthy workplace practices. Hold regular meetings to discuss this."

The aliens looked at each other. Their lips glowed.

"Thank you, Mr Rapi," said Alien#1.

"We'll take you home now," said Alien#2.

And they did.

Mr Rapi was celebrated for fostering intergalactic ties. The work safety rate on the alien planet improved by ninety percent. As it turned, workplace safety is truly universal.

From time to time, the aliens came to Earth to discuss the latest work safety measures.

And each time, they didn't forget their sanitation suits.

Abdul Rahman Bin Basrun

Open Category

Silver Award



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Creative Story Writing

POWERLESS

I am powerless to do anything
And I do not think that
I can influence the safety culture in my workplace
I know this may be hard to believe now but
"Workplace safety is everyone's responsibility"
is a lie, and
"I can only do so much"
As I progress in my ranks, I will tell everyone
There is no time to take care of your health and safety
No one will need to know that
Safety is a priority because
Results at work
Are more important than
Watching out for safety
Although we can do more
Safety is hard
We can all see that
If we have this mentality
Accidents will continue to be rampant in my workplace
I do not think that
We all have a part to play for safety
Apathy will be the norm
We cannot ever say that
Everyone has to care about safety
In the world that we live in
I cannot prevent injuries
It is foolhardy to think that
I have the power to make a change.
That is, unless we say "Stop!" and turn this situation around.

Tan Yeong Tat, Wilgene

Open Category

Silver Award

This reverse poem carries a negative connotation when read from top down, but when read bottom up, has a positive, completely opposite meaning. What this poem attempts to exemplify beyond the words is that no matter the existing culture of our organisation and no matter the existing mentalities we may have, we can make it better so long as we believe we have the power within us to make a change. Many organisations use extrinsic motivation to promote a safety culture (Reward or Reprimand), but it is really intrinsic motivation that allows this vision to be realised. I hope through my poem I can inspire others to take an active approach to change the status quo!



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Creative Story Writing

NO SECOND CHANCES

"Pride comes before the fall"
Is what people always say.
But I doubt anyone thought at all
Like what had happened today.

"Ali" was what he was often called
I never knew his name.
He would often leave everyone appalled
And refused to be tame.

"I've done this many times before
There is no need to worry!
Football is starting soon at four
Let's do it in a hurry!"

Climbing ladders three rungs each step
With grace that showed his years.
Forgetting to take the builder's cap
All cries fell on deaf ears.

Then came the sudden slip!
He went falling through the air.
Looking on I bit my lip
And barely dared to stare.

Thankfully, salvation came
As his safety line went taut.
"Finally he'll learn this isn't a game"
Or so I really thought.

What happened next was the worst
As he went swinging back.
He had knocked into a beam headfirst
with a sickening crack.

So ends his life's tale
Because of what he chose.
It only takes one time to fail
So always be on your toes.

Joshua Yapp Wei Sheng
Open Category
Bonze Award



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

PINKIE

"Hey Pinky! Over here!"

Pinky? What a strange name, I thought, as a man I had never seen walk to our table. Nothing about him – his hair, his clothes, his spectacles – was pink.

"Hi, everyone," he said, smiling warmly like the beach sun.

The guy who called him over, Manik, stood up and slapped my shoulder. "Pinky, say hello to our newest recruit – Wadud."

Pinky, if that was his real name, looked at me, the smile still there. "So you're the newbie. Hi, I'm Mr Kalam."

What? Mr Kalam? Wasn't he... the manager of this factory?

Pinky – wait, Mr Kalam – extended his right hand to me. I reciprocated, and once my hand clasped his, I jumped a bit, startled. Pinky's hand felt strange, as if I was holding on to a ball of flesh!

Manik guffawed; the rest of the table too. Pinky smiled widely.

"Sorry for that," Pinky said, holding up his right hand for all to see.

His hand was just a stump! Except for the little finger extending out, like a pencil sticking out of a lump of plasticine. The other four fingers were gone!

"Just the pinkie!" Manik blurted out, laughing.

Of course! Pinkie! As in little finger! Not Pinky! Somehow, I started to laugh too.

Someone made way, and Mr Kalam then sat down beside me.

"They do this every time a newbie comes in," Mr Kalam said.

I stitched my eyebrows. "But don't you feel...?" I paused.

"Offended?" Mr Kalam gave a fatherly smile. "I told them to."

What? I thought.

No one spoke. All eyes were on Mr Kalam. Mr Kalam knew his cue.

"It happened ten years ago," he started. "I was fresh out of the university. Jobs were scarce. After six months, I decided to join a factory as a supervisor."

I cocked my ear.

"I was green. As green as a leaf in the sun," he continued. "And one day, it happened. A worker got his shirt stuck in a machine. I came and tried to pull it out. It pulled in my whole hand and cut off all four of my fingers. Except for the pinkie."

Everyone became silent. Heads hung.

"So now, every time someone new comes in, we give him this ritual," Manik cut in. "Get a handshake from Mr Kalam. Hear his story. Not from us. From him."

Mr Kalam nodded. "As a reminder – to all of us – how important it is to be safe. To follow the safety rules. To create them as many as necessary. Never to rush or act blindly. So that no one else will be called Pinkie."

I pursed my lips. My eyes then flitted up to meet his. "Thank you."

Mr Kalam stared back. "And from now on, it's Mr Kalam; no more Pinkie."

"Yes, Pinkie," I stammered. "Er, I mean Mr Kalam."

Everyone, including Pinkie, was tickled pink.

Abdul Rahman Bin Basrun

Open Category
Consolation Award



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Creative Story Writing

A LITTLE...

Take **a little** time and look around
Notice all the hustle and bustle?
People rushing left, people rushing right
Some just crash right into you
But keep on with their hurried stride

Take **a little** time and look to your side
Is there a person with their head down in a frown?
Drowned so deep in work after work
That never do you get a chance
To sit back and just have a chat

Take **a little** time and look at yourself
When was the last time you were not working?
Life now drives only in the fast lane
And you chug along with no other choice
But remember to have a little breather here and there

Take **a little** time and think out loud
Has the pandemic tested all of your will?
Some may have ridden it out with ease
Some may have lived the lowest of lows
But everyone emerges bright one way or the other

Take **a little** time: for you owe it to yourself
If your body is your temple then the sanctum
That is your mind deserves some dignity
Not to taken slight are its basic needs
For no amount of money can undo the deed

Gowtham S/O Subramanian

Open Category
Consolation Award



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

TAKE TIME TO TAKE CARE OF OUR HEALTH AT WORK

Sufficient sleep is the best
At least seven hours of daily rest
Fruits and vegetables are healthy
Eat them more regularly
Take time to stretch, bend down
You need to move around

Stress and deadlines can be managed
Team-working with colleagues is an advantage
Allow yourself small breaks
Recharge and rejuvenate
There's also a need to hydrate
Slip in frequent water breaks

Whenever you feel eye-strains
It helps to rest your brains
Take a look out of the window
Here and there, might be a rainbow

Mindful awareness is the key
Ensuring our health is priority

Gabriel Wong Kiat En
Secondary Category
Silver Award



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

DON'T LOOK THE OTHER WAY

She flung her wet hands towards the floor
I guess drying them with tissues was a chore
I could have stopped her that day
but I chose to look the other way
I heard someone slip and fall
when i was in the restroom stall
And so I opened the door to see
someone bleeding heavily

From the fridge, he grabbed the carton of milk
In his hurry, a little bit was spilt
He glanced at the expiry date
and the milk was passed its use-by state
"Don't consume expired food" Mom had said
but he chugged it all down instead
I could have stopped him that day
but again, I chose to look the other way
The next day, he cried out in pain
"You have food poisoning" the doctor explained

Mom was getting dolled up to go for dinner
She curled her hair to make herself look slimmer
In her excitement, she made a huge error
She left the curling iron on the dresser
I could have stopped her that day
But once again, i chose to look the other way
We came home to a piercing crowd
and wondered what the commotion was all about
To our horror, the situation was dire
Due to our negligence, our entire house was on fire

From school, I was taking the usual route home
when I saw a sign saying "DANGER! Construction zone"
But I just took out my phone
and continued my usual path alone
People jogging nearby threw me a disapproving glance
as I walked into the zone and never stood a chance
They could have stopped me that day
but they chose to look the other way

The rope frayed, starting to sway
and i looked up in dismay
BOOM! It was a huge blow.
A poor decision made just seconds ago
No one warned me from danger,
just like how I didn't either



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

Don't ignore anything that might be a threat
I guess what you give is what you get
You can save someone from danger anyday
so don't choose to look the other way

Clara Ng Xin Yue
Secondary School Category
Bronze Award



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

THE COLLAPSE

He pressed the wrinkled, obscured photo firmly between his calloused fingers. Like many others, it was what kept him going. During the toughest of times when the unforgiving sun pierced through our lifeless bodies, the thought of our family and loved ones back home gave us a surge of vigor from the depth of our soul. These thoughts invigorated us from the bowels of our souls, urging us to labour on.

"Get to your feet! What are you waiting for?", Mr. Tan thundered.

Aarush pored over the photo of his wife and new-born son affectionately before tenderly slipping the picture into his breast pocket.

Aarush, meaning 'The Sun' in Hindu, had a similar character as his name. Unlike many others I've seen in my last decade of working as a construction worker in Singapore, Aarush was blithesome and diligent. Despite only arriving last week, he has already mastered most of the construction techniques required and has integrated into our band of foreign construction workers. We stood up and made our way to the construction site hastily. The small portion of Nasi Briyani barely filled my stomach but we had no time to waste. The deadline for the construction of the new rehabilitation facility at the hospital was in a month and we are miles behind schedule. Mr. Tan had been pushing us hard at work, demanding that we pressed on as he futilely clung on to any remnant of hope that we would be able to meet the outrageous deadline.

"Oh no, I forgot take helmet", Aarush quibbled anxiously.

I looked back. Only to meet Mr. Tan's devilish stare.

"Forget it! You want get scolded?", I replied hurriedly.

We mixed the cement and added some water. Mixed the cement and added more sand. Again, again and again. We worked in silence, focused on the task at hand. Then, an idle thought came to me-is it really that necessary to wear this suffocating helmet? This heat is unbearable and I could really use a-

That's when I saw it. From the thick fog of ash and rubble that blanketed the area, I looked upwards as I heard a loud creaking noise reverberate through the air. The jib. It's hoist rope had snapped and its hook and sheave swayed through the air precariously. A loud, ominous boom sent shockwaves through my being as the jib ruptured from its pivot and tumbled down. My eyes widened as my jaws hung agape. Time seemed to slow down. It had landed squarely. Pierced through his abdomen, blood stained the surrounding debriefs. The sun had collapsed. I was mortified and horrified. Like a scalded cat, I registered A sharp jolt on the back of my head. I passed out.

"Channel News Asia. 04 Nov 2019 11:50. An Indian national was killed on November the 4th when the jib of a tower crane failed during a lifting operation at the construction site of a new facility at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Another man, aged 35, was injured."

Donavan Quek
Secondary School Category
Bronze Award



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Creative Story Writing

THE YELLOW HAT

'Safety' is not a word that we usually speak.
Maybe that's why many fall without a creak.
Down the wooden boards they tumble,
Scaffolding emitting not even a mumble.

Yellow hats we were meant to wear,
Scattered on the flooring without a care.
Down the pipes and many poles,
Most fall and break their bones.

A knock to the head is all that is needed,
To send one crumpling down to the basement.
Like the asphalt concrete in the mixers,
They flow all the way down as fillers.

Yet they still do not care,
Laughing about with much hair.
Those strands should have been covered,
Under the yellow hat they wouldn't have suffered.

Megan Kirsty Dawe
Secondary School Category
Bronze Award



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Creative Story Writing

WHENEVER YOU ARE

Whenever you are in a rush,
On the expressway behind a bus,
Do not speed like it's your last,
To avoid getting into an accident and get crushed.

Whenever you are working at heights,
Check your harness, make sure it's tight.
Hooks properly secured and right,
or not you might fall like a crashing flight.

Whenever you are using machinery,
Make sure everything is intact, don't be in a hurry.
Place your hands away from any moving machinery,
or not you might end up losing a pinky.

Whenever you are climbing a ladder,
get a friend to help stabilise it better,
so that it would be safer,
and you would not fall from the ladder.

Whenever you are dehydrated,
don't forget to drink some water and get hydrated,
or not you might become too exhausted,
to do anything and become depleted.

Whatever you are doing in life,
take time to think about your safety, your life.
Just count to five,
and remember that safety must be applied!

Nicole Lim Hwee See
Secondary School Category
Bronze Award



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Creative Story Writing

MY BIGGEST REGRET

The sun rose, the birds chirped
I was tired from a late night of work
Morning through night, I toiled away
Knowing the deadline was too tight to obey

I donned my protection, two sizes too big
With wear and tear evident on my gloves and boots.
Alas, I couldn't care, for they haven't yet failed
To protect my fingers and toes

Entering the building from the side,
You could see how much it shrunk inside
Cardboard boxes cluttering walls,
Looming over me from above

Weaving through the manmade jungle
Constricting me like a python with its prey
the air grew thin, the darkness overwhelmed
I inched my way through the nightmare before me

A water pipe burst, unlucky me
Splashing through the muddled water pooling at my feet
Splutter, splatter, crinkle, squeak
I wadded my way through the creek

Reaching the room, my clothes wet and sodden
I prodded my way to the right corner
My boss's words rang in my head
"Demolish the wall, then go home", he said

Thoughts raced through my mind
How nice it would be, I thought,
Going home early to my family?
Dazed in a trance, I turned on the drill

Bam! It's mellifluous screech penetrated the walls
Echoing in my head, taunting me with its calls
I realised I had sorely forgotten
My earmuffs, my hearings protection

Help! I yelled, but no one could hear me
Over the clamour and racket I had caused
I wanted to run, but that was my fatal mistake
It still haunts me to this very day



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Creative Story Writing

I do not remember much, I was blinded,
Panic had overtaken the reins of control
I ran, that much I can say
Though I do not know in which way

Next thing I know, my feet were up in the air
Time slowed, pain radiates through my body
Water pooled in my ears, muffling the screams
Something heavy had fallen upon me
Consciousness slipped by and I fell into a deep sleep

Dazed, I awoke from my slumber
In a white bed, lined with white sheets
Bouquets of flowers resided on the table in front of me
Doctors walked in and solemnly told me

It cost an arm and a leg
Bound to a wheelchair, I could not bear the weight
Of my regret and anguish
I took my body for granted and paid the price for my negligence

What could I have done?
How could I have been careless?
Your safety should be your priority
If not for you, then for your friends and family

My incident could have been prevented
If I had not carelessly pretended
So listen now to my decree
And know this, Safety starts with you and me

Kimberly Niam
Secondary School Category
Consolation Award



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

THE FINAL HOURS

6.30am:

The Shrill alarm permeated his dorm room,
The still dark scenery outside the window foreshadowed the grim outcome of the day
still , 3 hours to live.....

7am:

The Smell of Freshly brewed coffee in the commons,
Seemed however to show what a bitter day it would result in...

7.30am:

He Changed into Overalls with the scent of the previous day's work,
Seemed to foreshadow a last day of work for time immemorial,
2 hours still...

7.45am:

Meeting fellow men of the same brotherhood, waiting for their transport to work,
All met with a common goal, yet one would leave soon tragically, as one might say

8am:

Driving through the Country's Roads, seeing the sights and sounds of Singapore
This would be his last time seeing the country he came to work in

8.30am

His workplace was filled with the sound of drills, hammers and clanking.
A cacophony of sound that sounded like a funeral procession
An hour left to live....

9.00am

He would laugh, joke and fool around with his fellow men,
But as fate would have it, he, would be the greatest "fool" of them all,
The hour glass of time was still trickling away, but then again, little did he know..

At 9.30am:

He would climb up a rather shaky metal structure to fix something...
The surroundings blaring with clanking, honking...
Further and further he would climb, his harness strap flapping in the wind....
Unaware and tired, he would let go of one hand,
And fall through the wind like a missile....
Countless men screaming in pandemonium...
The world moved slowly and as he got closer and closer...
The countless memories of his life flashed past him... including his impending fate
3...
2...
1...

Lacking comprehension, he impacted the ground...

The time of death would be recorded as 9.31am



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME COMPETITION 2021

Creative Story Writing

If only he had been more careful and perhaps serious.. misfortune would have been avoided?
Definitely...
However, it was too late.

Safety started with him, and also with you and I in life,
You never want to end up like him.. Do you?

Leong Ren Kai Caleb
Secondary School Category
Consolation Award