



BEIWATCH

BEIMUN XXIX

PRE-CONFERENCE ISSUE

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BEIMUN XXIX



By Ivy Yang

After months of eventful and diligent preparation, it is finally time for delegates to once again enjoy fervent online debates regarding pressing global issues. Driven with compassion and determination for solving real world issues, we welcome delegates to the 29th annual Beijing Model United Nations conference hosted online.

Stepping forward from the previous successful online Beijing Model United Nations XXVIII conference hosted last year, it is exciting to welcome back delegates, chairs, and officers to another online gathering. Due to the complications raised by the pandemic, delegates will be meeting online again this year. Nonetheless, online platforms still enable delegates to demonstrate their remarkable public speaking and research skills. Over the course of

three days, delegates will exchange opinions through heated debates and discussions regarding this year's fitting theme of "Leadership through Coopetition." The outbreak of Covid-19 has changed the global community in inconceivable ways. Arising political issues are on the horizon as the pandemic amplified the severity of diplomatic relations and political competition between nations. As the worst times of the pandemic subtly passed, now is the perfect opportunity for delegates to enrich their understanding and pitch innovative solutions to form healthier international relationships between nations and individuals to benefit global citizens. In the process of developing resolutions, students can enhance their abilities and skills through research, lobby, and debate. For both returning and new delegates participating in this year's BEIMUN XXIX, this is an exceptional opportunity to practice

leadership and teamwork skills, in addition to gaining confidence while pitching proposals.

Each year, BEIMUN serves as an aspiring learning experience that means much more than just a meeting. Immersed in the professional and enthusiastic atmosphere throughout each conference, the unique sets of perspectives from groups of diverse individuals highlight the purposes of Model United Nations. Aside from the tense discussions, new memories are created here every year, and it gives students a chance to form new connections with people across different cities and schools.

Kudos to everyone for exemplifying diligence and professionalism; Beiwatch wishes all participants the best of luck in the upcoming BEIMUN XXIX conference for a successful and memorable experience!

BEIMUN China Cancelled and BEIMUN XXIX Remains Online

By Alex Leung

The BEIMUN China conference, originally set to begin October 29, 2021, was postponed due to recent outbreaks of the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus. Throughout the city, large-scale events and public gatherings were restricted and postponed, in an effort to lower the risk of spreading the epidemic and ensure public safety. Additionally, during the buildup to the Winter Olympics, travel was further restricted around Beijing to accomplish the government-imposed “Zero COVID Case Policy” and to create a safe environment for athletes. Due to these increasingly tight restrictions, ISB could no longer host such a large student body, and the BEIMUN China conference was canceled on December 29.

With the arrival of the Winter Olympics, all Beijing secondary schools transferred to online learning. Most school events have either been moved online, postponed, or completely cancelled. This year’s BEIMUN XXIX conference is no exception, as all delegates will have to participate through Microsoft Teams. As the host school, ISB has created a comprehensive BEIMUN online platform which includes over a hundred smaller breakout rooms for committees, as well as for student officers, directors, and the approval panel. The platform also allows quick transitions for delegates between their breakout rooms, the general room, and the help desk.

Outside of BEIMUN, other international events were severely affected by the pandemic. This includes the 2022 Winter Olympics held in Beijing, which began on February 4th. At the various venues around the city, competitions were mostly held behind closed doors. Although there were some spectators, only residents in China were permitted to spectate on the competitions in-person. Additionally, tickets to the general public were cancelled due to the outbreak of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus, and the audience members were only admitted by invitation.

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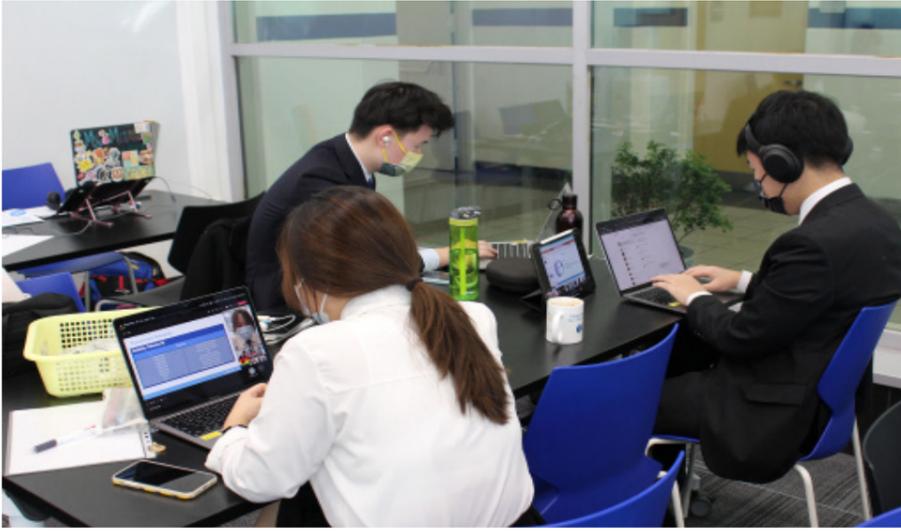
SCHOOLS COMING TO BEIMUN XXIX



American International School Chennai
 American International School Dhaka
 American School of Kuwait
 Bandung Independent School
 Beijing International Bilingual Academy
 Beijing World Youth Academy
 Brent International School Manila
 British School Manila
 British School of Beijing
 Canadian Academy
 Canadian International School of Hefei
 Cebu International School
 Concordia International School Hanoi

Concordia International School Shanghai
 Dulwich College Beijing
 Dwight School Seoul
 FMV Ozel Ayazaga Isik & Fen Lisesi
 Gadjah Mada University
 German European School Singapore
 Hwa Chong Institution
 International School of Beijing
 International School of Tianjin
 Keystone Academy
 Nanjing International School
 P&E Academy
 Panyaden International School

Seoul Foreign School
 Sha Tin College
 Shanghai American School Pudong
 Shanghai SMIC Private School
 Shekou International School
 St Margaret’s Secondary School
 The Kelly Yang Project
 Tianjin International School
 Unidad educativa colegio Santa Elvira
 Utahloy International School Guangzhou
 Xi’an Liangjiatan International School
 Yat Sen Secondary School
 Yew Chung International School



BEIWATCH TEAM



LEADERSHIP THROUGH COOPETITION



By Dorothy Du

The 21st century has brought significant advances for humanity. Innovation continues to refine and advance science into improving our quality of life while the importance of human rights and morality has gradually gained recognition. However, a recent and unprecedented pandemic sweeping through every continent revealed the reality of the thin strings holding our world together. As more people are relapsing into a mindset of hatred and superiority, the longer bleak circumstances pervade and existing inequalities between class and race are also resurfacing. With conflict, polarization, and nationalization pervading the contemporary political stage, the only way to catch glimmers of hope and unify the human race is if leading officials

put aside their differences and selfish endeavors. The utilization of effective collaboration strives towards a better future. In other words, leaders must find innovative solutions by fostering an approach to competition that is based on cooperation and respect. Perhaps many BEIMUN delegates will become such leaders of tomorrow.

This year, delegates will gather to discuss the fitting theme “Leadership through Coopetition.” The invitation letter for BEIMUN XXIX states that “although ‘coopetition’ is a term originally derived from business, we believe that this approach holds a great deal of promise far beyond it, allowing countries to build on one another’s strengths by creating synergistic relationships for the benefit of all.”

Secretariat Youngsoo Kim eloquently comments on the purpose of BEIMUN by saying, “cautiously entering a post-pandemic age, mankind now faces its greatest ordeal: recovery, reconciliation, and a redefined international order. In the face of discord, I think it’s ever-important to harken back to the foundational principles of the UN and reinforce our solidarity as a human race.” Indeed, meaningful discourse aimed at strengthening solidarity is crucial in times such as these. Years into the future when our present solidifies into history books and the minds of students as distant stories, we hope the world will look back and beam at the way a generation of leaders rose to lead the world towards a brighter future through coopetition.



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VARIANTS OF COVID

By Emily Parker

Continents and countries worldwide are being blanketed by an ongoing pandemic of a contagious disease caused by a severe acute respiratory syndrome known as Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). According to the World Health Organization, since the first reported case of Coronavirus on the 31st of December 2019, 243 million people (reported cases) scattered across the world have caught COVID-19, leading to preventative measures including physical and social distancing, quarantining, ventilation of indoor spaces, and large precautions in personal hygiene and sanitation. With an arising world-facing human-impacted catastrophe has come an awakening of several severe COVID-19 variants, including Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Zeta, Eta, Theta, Iota, Kappa, Lambda, Mu, and Cluster 5, which are believed to be of particular importance due to their potential for increased transmissibility, increased virulence, or reduced effectiveness of vaccines against them.

Viruses constantly change through mutation, and when a virus has one or more new mutations, it is called a variant of the original virus. SARS-CoV-2, the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19, has changed enough throughout the pandemic to modify both its ability to propagate through the population and its ability to infect humans. The Alpha variant of SARS-CoV-2, for example, is more transmissible than the original form. According to studies made by the CDC and journals submitted by *The Conversation*, it is between 43% and 90% more contagious than the virus that was most prevalent at the onset of the epidemic. Alpha is also more prone to cause serious illness, as seen by higher rates of hospitalization and mortality following infection. Considerably more

alarming, the Delta variant is said to be more than twice as contagious as earlier strains and may cause even more severe sickness in unvaccinated people. The viral load of people infected with Delta – the amount of virus identified in an infected person's nasal passages – has also been reported to be over 1,000 times higher than that of those infected with SARS-original CoV-2's variant. Recent evidence reveals that both unprotected and vaccinated patients have similar virus levels, adding to the variant's very infectious nature.

To help prevent future new variants of the COVID-19 virus, scientists and experts employed at the World Health Organization (WHO) believe that “stopping the spread at the source remains key” (“The Effects Of Virus Variants On COVID-19 Vaccines”), and continue to advise the general public to be responsive and follow directory orders with current measures to reduce transmission, including physical and social distancing, frequent hand washing, wearing a mask, good ventilation, and avoiding heavily crowded locations or closed settings as best as possible. Reducing the number of viral transmissions and cases spread from person-to-person will lead to fewer opportunities for the virus to mutate. Additionally, scaling up vaccine production and distributing vaccines as early and extensively as feasible will be crucial in protecting people before they are exposed to the virus and new variations. To optimize worldwide protection against novel variations and limit the likelihood of transmission, high-risk groups should be vaccinated first. Ensuring equal access to COVID-19 vaccinations is more important than ever to combat the pandemic's changing nature and mutating behavior.



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Olympics Back to Back: Summer Olympics 6 Months Ago

By Sophie Bai

The 32nd annual summer Olympic games, held in Tokyo, Japan from July 23rd to August 8th brought together 11,656 athletes who represented 206 nations. Originally scheduled for 2020, the Tokyo Olympics was the first-ever postponed Olympics games in history, due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. With the high infection rates in Tokyo, both local and foreign fans were restricted from attending the actual event. Only a few domestic spectators were permitted to enter, resulting in once-packed stadiums looking empty and deserted.

Regardless of the difficulties caused by the pandemic, countless memorable moments occurred during the 17 ardent days. New Olympic and world records were made in quick succession as athletes pushed to raise the bar higher and higher. The three medals allotted for every event, totalling 339, were swiftly claimed by remarkable athletes who trained through blood, sweat and tears for their moment. The intense competition ended with the United States finishing at the top of the medal board with 39 gold medals, followed closely by China with 38, and Japan with 27.

Besides competition, sportsmanship was always on full display. Countless sparks of respect and compassion were shared between athletes celebrating others' accomplishments. Through online streaming, heartwarming moments redefined the Olympic spirit for all spectators. Tokyo successfully demonstrated that "the most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle." - Pierre de Coubertin, Founder of the modern Olympic games.

As the fireworks of the closing ceremony illuminate the sky above the stadium, the Tokyo Olympic Games draw to an end. Though the journey of participating in the Olympic games ends here for some athletes, the world looks forward to returning athletes making their splash 3 years down the line in Paris.



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BEIJING 2022



By Alex Leung and Gigi Shum

Beijing - The City of Dual Olympics

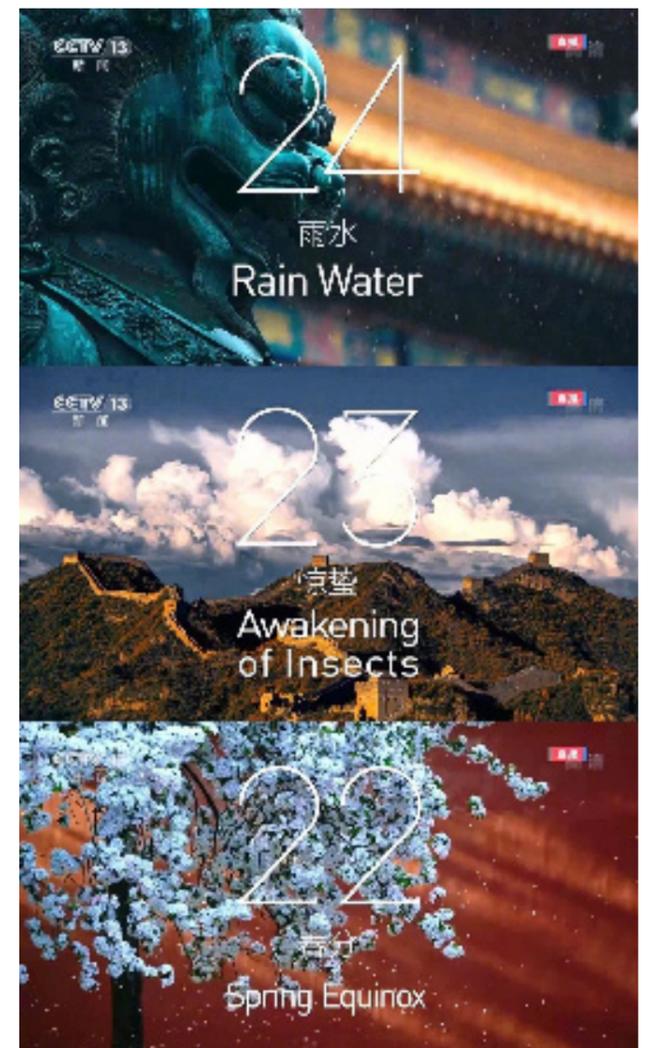
14 years after the grand opening of the 2008 Summer Olympics in the Bird's Nest Beijing National Stadium, Beijing once again welcomed the Olympics in 2022. With Yanqing District and the neighboring city Zhangjiakou, Beijing became the first to host both the Summer and Winter Olympics, earning its name as the "Dual Olympic City." Three nations made their appearances after missing out on the 2018 games: Peru returned after an eight year absence, while Haiti and Saudi Arabia made their Winter Olympics debut. Capitalizing on the infrastructure brought by the 2008 Summer Olympics, four buildings that previously hosted events were repurposed and reused for the 2022 Winter Olympics' games: the Bird's Nest (opening and closing ceremonies), Water Cube (curling), National Indoor Stadium (speed skating) and the Capital Indoor Stadium (figure skating). The Wukesong (Cadillac) Arena was also repurposed for the ice hockey events.

The Opening Ceremony

Zhang Yimou, the director of the opening ceremony for the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, once again faced the demanding but thrilling task and directed the 2022 Winter Olympics' opening ceremony. With an emphasis on traditional Chinese culture, the opening ceremony began with a video displaying the Chinese 24 solar terms. From "the awakening of insects" and "the spring equinox," to "pure brightness" and "the summer solstice," each solar term appeared orderly following a gradual countdown with respect to the Chinese calendar. The countdown soon accelerated and finally culminated in "the beginning of spring" - that is, February 4, 2022, coincidentally the exact day of the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. At that moment, fireworks soared midair, forming a dandelion and the word "spring" in Chinese and English. Then, a blue drop of water fell from the sky and turned into the surging waters of the Yellow River. The water rushed down and converged in the center of the venue and turned into a giant ice cube, which then delicately broke off to display the curvatures of the five Olympic rings.

The Medals Table

Norway raced to first place with 16 gold medals and 37 medals in total, retaining their glory and championship from the previous 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics. Germany came in second place with 12 gold medals and 27 medals in total, earning slightly less than its 2018 Pyeongchang record. China placed third with 9 gold medals and 15 medals in total, surging greatly from the 2018 Pyeongchang record.



WINTER OLYMPICS

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What to Expect for Your College Application

By Daniel Lee

Harvard! Columbia! Princeton! Ivy League! Today, the idea that college decides one's future success pervades the minds of students and parents worldwide. The increasing significance of university applications has led competition to unprecedented heights.

Along with extracurricular activities such as MUN, individuals prepare for standardized exams to increase their chance of acceptance by boosting their academic capabilities to universities. These tests intend to measure individuals' knowledge and problem-solving skills under pressuring timed-conditions.



Out of the myriad standardized assessments a student may sit for, the most recognized is the College Board's SAT: "more than 4,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. and 85 other countries consider SAT scores to help them make informed admissions decisions."

Despite their global recognition, the assessments have faced crucial reforms. For instance, on January

19th, 2021, the College Board publicized the complete removal of the SAT-II Subject Tests and the SAT Essay to better "respond to the changing needs of students and colleges." In other words, the demand for these exams has decreased, resulting in a simplification of the assessment process.

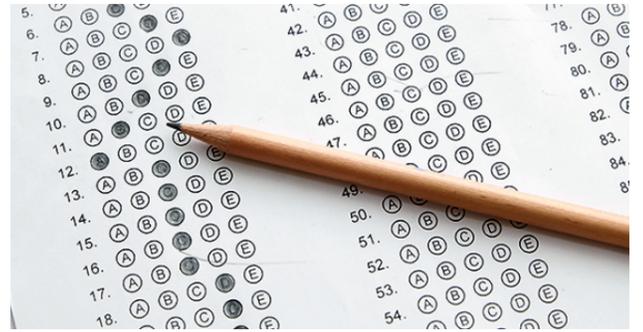
As their name suggests, SAT-II Subject Tests assessed students' skills in specific subjects such as chemistry, psychology, and mathematics. These tests have been removed because Advanced Placement exams are already subject-specific; there is no need to add more testing stress. Thus, the growing availability of AP exams has resulted in SAT-II Subject Tests' withdrawal.

Moreover, another reason why SAT-II Subject Tests were discontinued comes from the shift in the college application paradigm. The American education system, especially for elite colleges, has a holistic review of applicants and looks more into extracurriculars than standardized testing. This change has led to a decrease in the need for standardized exams such as the SAT-II Subject tests.

Additionally, on the old test, the SAT Essay determined nearly one-third of the total score. The essay required students to analyze a given passage considering the author's intentions. In fact, with the removal of the additional writing section, the SAT has become cheaper to take, decreasing from \$68 to \$52, not considering shipping fees for international exams ("How Much Does the SAT Cost?").

Moreover, standardized testing policies have been modified due to the coronavirus pandemic. The risk of contamination has made face masks mandatory in testing centers.

Along with that, in some places such as Beijing, a nucleic acid test result was compulsory to apply for off-line exams.



Furthermore, the 2021 AP exams were hosted online through an app developed by the College Board, and they were contrastive to the traditional paper-and-pencil assessments. Firstly, online test applicants had to cope with the severe disadvantage of not being able to skip through questions in the multiple-choice section. Also, different versions – along with varying difficulties – of the same subject's test were given. In addition, all online tests had to begin at the same time, meaning that test takers around the world had to adjust to a different biorhythm. For example, the Online AP Candidates in Beijing had to take the test at either 12 am or 4 am. These policies were implemented in an effort to keep digital testing secure.

College admissions were also influenced by the pandemic and the changes in standardized tests. For the first time in history, Ivy League acceptance was in the single digits. The mean acceptance rate was 5.4% across all eight universities, with the minimum being 3.9% for Columbia. The pressure for colleges is becoming increasingly intense; thus, it is important for students to be aware of the standardized tests' content and policy modifications to better prepare them for the future.

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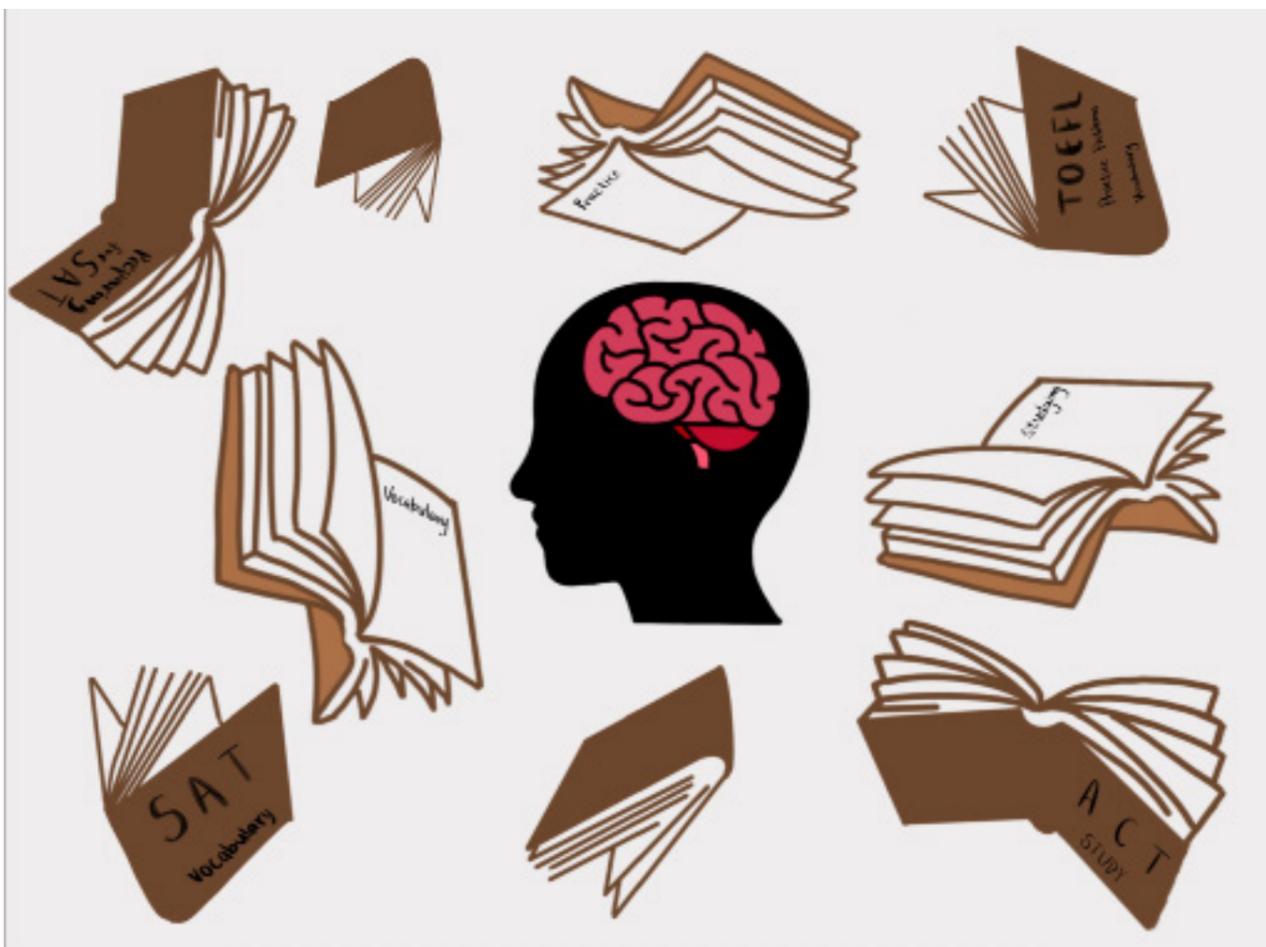
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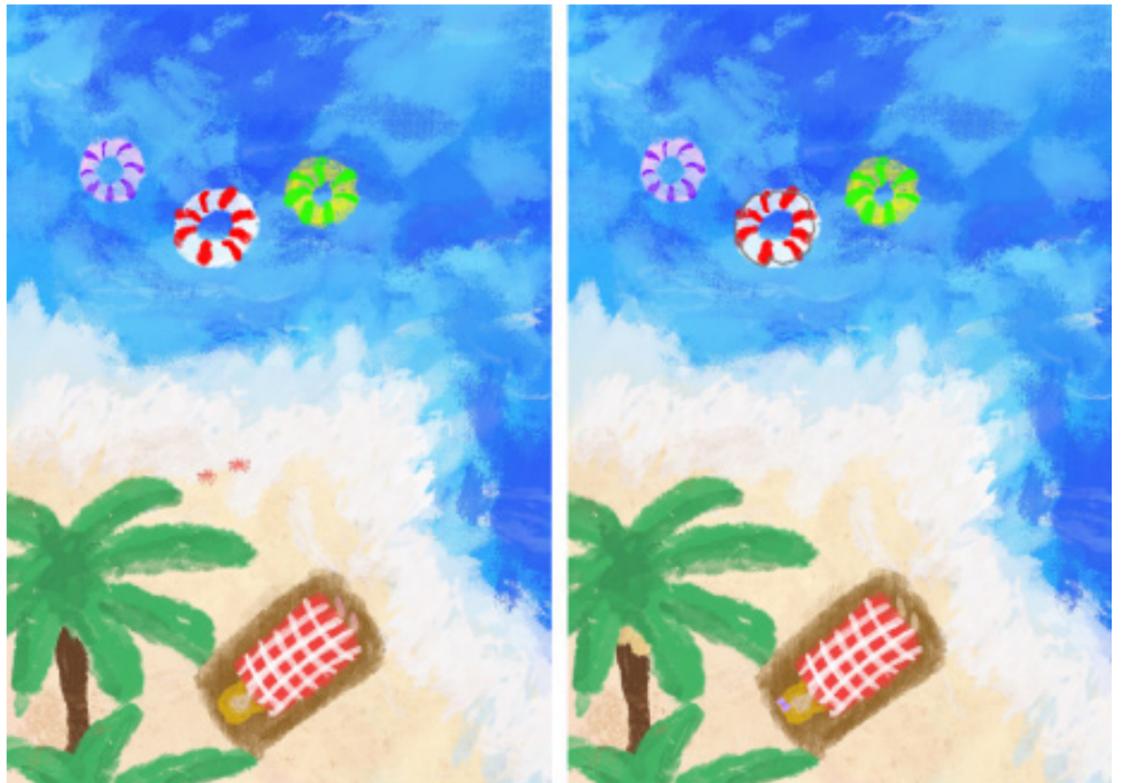
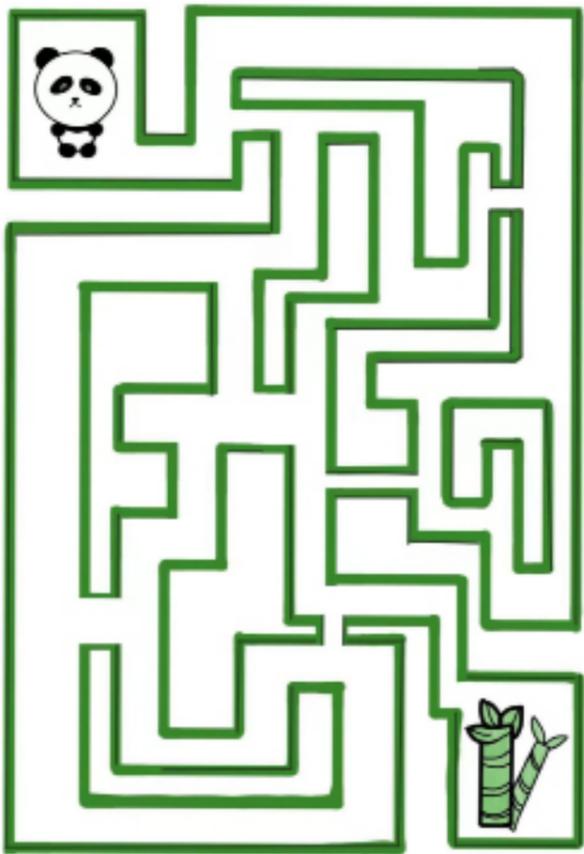
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