



**What if ...?**

**eBook of  
summer writing by children**

# The best of the YOCEE Summer Writing Contest 2013

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*This eBook is an anthology of the best entries received for the Summer Writing Contest held in April 2013.*

*The themes:*

- 1. What if I lived in the moon this summer?  
(For 8 – 10 years)*
- 2. What if I had a bicycle and two days to  
roam about in Chennai? (For 11 – 13 years)*
- 3. What if I were to redesign Chennai city?  
(For 14 to 16 years)*



← *Articles with this badge won prizes*

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## Twenty seven days of fun

**R. Palaniappan. Age 9**

I am living in the Earth for the past 9 years. I am bored by seeing the natural scenes of the Earth, so I feel excited to visit the moon.

To visit the moon first I have to catch a flight to California to visit NASA Space station where I can get insulated space suits fitted with oxygen tanks and multivitamin tablets. These insulated space suites will help me to bear the extreme temperatures in the moon. My space shuttle will set off when I land on the moon.

I will proudly hoist the Indian flag and will take samples of rocks to show to my friends and I will give them to the research centre for further researches. I will be able to see the foot prints of astronauts like Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin Aldrin. I will also leave my footprint so that even my name will be in history books. I will be floating on moon because of the gravitational force of moon. The gravitational force of moon is one sixth of Earth. So I will just weigh 4 kg.

I hate eating food so taking vitamin tablets will be a boon to me. One rotation of moon takes twenty seven days ,so I can read books, play, jump and write reports for thirteen and half days and will sleep throughout the other thirteen and half days. I can see the Earth from moon which will look like a big blue ball.

I will be happy to stay on the moon which will be void of mosquitoes. I will try to find whether life will exist on moon.

The things that I have to forego for a short time while I visit the moon are my Ben 10 episodes, chocolates, ice creams, toys, iPad, computers, iPhone games etc. But I am ready to miss my favourite things just for experiencing the life in the moon because it's a life time opportunity.



# Earth is the best!

**Roshni K.R. Age 10**



I was eagerly waiting for my summer vacation so that I could go to Kerala, my native place to spend my holidays with my grandparents. But unfortunately my grandparents had planned a pilgrimage trip and were away. So what's the fun in going to Kerala then?

During the next few days we came to know about the Space shuttle which was taking tourists to the Moon for the summer holidays for a week so we immediately booked ourselves on the Shuttle.

My brother and I were so excited about going to the Moon; we even read many facts about the Moon's atmosphere and what all information we could gather about the Moon.

Before embarking on the journey all the tourists were given training how to take care of themselves on the Moon where there was no gravity, which was a new term for me! My elder brother Rohit explained to me in simple words what gravity was and also came to know about Sir Issac Newton and the apple which fell on the ground.

We were given space suits and an astronaut accompanied us on our journey. Finally our rocket took off with 20 passengers on board. Within few hours we entered space and we saw so many stones which were big in size. And within half an hour we reached Moon. As we put our first foot on Moon I remembered Neil Armstrong and his crew about whom we had studied in G.K. It was really out of the world experience.

Firstly I couldn't stand properly on the Moon's ground I felt so light. I felt moving around was quite different. We were breathing through tubes which were attached to Oxygen cylinders on our back. I felt like a robot. There was nothing on the Moon's surface. Unlike Earth there were no trees, flowers,



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## *What if I lived in the moon this summer?*

rivers, valleys etc. In fact there was no life!

We were given juice to drink and imagine when I spilt some juice it simply started to float instead of falling down on the ground. Ah! Now I understand what gravity is.

We tried to play football on the Moon and the ball simply wouldn't touch the ground. We couldn't even run around. We were floating in the air. We would return to our space shuttle to have food and even contact our friends on the Earth through phone calls.

Everyday we went roaming on Moon but only dust was visible. We spotted some footprints of the astronauts who had there been earlier and even flags of a few countries. From the monitor of the space ship we saw the heavenly bodies around and also found our own Earth. It looked so small.

I longed to be back on Earth. Finally, our space shuttle made a return trip and we were back on Earth in a few hours. Oh! How happy I was to be back home. The trip to the Moon seemed a distant dream. It was an experience in itself, a different world altogether. But 'East or West' our Earth is the best!



## Skate boards with moon rocks

***Sanjna Vivek. Age 10***



It would be a wonder living in the earth's only satellite this summer. On the first day of my visit, since I would have enough breath to survive for at least another two days, I would puff paper bags to save my breath.

My morning run would be around craters and the place between the dark phase of the moon and the brighter phase of the moon would be my home. On mornings I would shift to the bright side of the moon and in the night the dark.

It would pretty much be the same lifestyle led on earth. On the first day of my adventure I would have taken my favourite dish, *paneer tikka* and I would eat them with toothpicks. Once I am done eating, I would carve some funny faces on the moon's surface with the toothpicks, to entertain myself.

When the satellite (man made) comes to examine the moon, I would duck behind a crater and the satellite would only see the funny faces. The main idea is that people of the earth would get the wrong idea that there are aliens on the moon, who can draw.

The next day, rumours would be all over the newspaper spreading like wildfire. For even more entertainment, I would carve moon rocks into a skate board and I would use my metal bottle caps as the wheels. Without the caps on them, the bottles would be useless so I would use them as bowling pins and sphere shaped rock as the ball.

This time my mom would not need to yell at me for not wearing Sun block before going out to play. Well, if everyone came to the moon this summer, the fairness cream companies would be at loss and eventually shut down.

Unfortunately, some day my summer vacation would get over and I would have to return to earth. It would be a unique adventure, where I would never forget the ever fond memories of this breathtaking summer!





## Aliens, I am coming!

**Charan Aadhith. Age 9**

If I spent my summer on the moon, I would dance Gangnam Style and look for Neil Armstrong's footprints. Then, I would call my mom and say 'Hey Mom!! The moon is really a cool place to spend my summer in. Thanks for sending me here, I love you and see you soon!' My mom would then say 'Super my dear, Have fun and be safe'.

If there are aliens on the moon, I would say, 'Hello, What is your name'? I would also buy an alien ship and a pet. If I had lots of money called 'Aliuppees', I would take the aliens' DNA samples and send them to NASA for research.

I will feel like going around the moon and would see a shopping complex full of stores. I will purchase a TV for around 100 Aliuppees. I would play with the remote and randomly put this channel which happens to be a show from earth called AFV (America's Funniest Videos).

I will meet the president of the moon and introduce myself as an ambassador from earth. The aliens will welcome me happily. Their dresses will look really rags and dirty. They may have an extra eye on the top of their head. Their teeth may have rainbow colors. I will make friends with the moon's aliens and tell them about internet and email IDs. They will be surprised to hear about it.

I will note down all my experiments and findings in my journal, so I can share them when I return to earth. I would eat an alien burger, the buns in which are really slimy and there would be antennae on the vegetables which are gold in color. I would carry some alien space movies with me from earth to show the aliens in the moon. They may have a hard time in understanding the movie because the movie would be in English and I



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haven't had a chance to teach them English.

I would use the ways of the ninjas by watching 'Ninja Hatori'. I would teach the moon aliens the tricks and rules of whipping games. I would study how to clone an alien and then watch alien news.

I would see how schools uniforms look like. One thing I may find about aliens is that they would have a major weakness to high pitch sounds, so we should always have low volume for survival. Aliens may like to roam around the city in groups.

I would always do shopping in the moon during nights because I really like the stuff that is available in the stores in the moon. When I come back to earth, I will share my experiences with my family and friends.

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## From bed, straight to the moon

**Sayee Sanjana. Age 8**

Yippee! Its summer holidays! Summer is so much fun as I will get to go on long vacations, eat sweet mangoes and juicy watermelons, drink plenty of fresh juices, play with my friends and have loads of fun.

As I was thinking about this, my father came back from office. He called us and said, "Guys! Come here and take a look at this!" Me, my mother and my pet dog Toffee, quickly gathered in our living room to see what my father had brought home.

My father told us to close our eyes and said "1, 2 and 3! Open your eyes now!" We opened our eyes and saw four tickets to the moon! I asked, "Dad, how did you get this?" He said, "I won a contest which was held in my office and got four free tickets to the moon. We will stay there for fifteen days. I said, "Dad, can we take Toffee also? It will be fun!" Dad said, "Alright, we will take him for sure. Don't worry." Thank you very much daddy.

"Ok guys! Be ready for tomorrow. We are going to go to the Sriharikota rocket launch area in Andhra Pradesh. So be ready and pack your things fast" Daddy said. We reached Andhra Pradesh at around 4 am next day. We took a bus from the airport which dropped us in Sriharikota. We were amazed to see that the Space Centre was busy early morning as it was getting ready for sending us to the moon!

Daddy asked, "Do you know that Sriharikota is an island? It was developed as a space research Centre 41 years ago in 1971..." before dad could finish the sentence, mom said "I think it is time to go."

We went to the rocket launching place. We were taken inside the rocket and given spacesuits. We wore the space suits and it was real fun to see Toffee wearing the suit. Then we fastened our seat belts and the countdown began.....10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0! Zoom! And we were off to the moon!



*What if I lived in the moon this summer?*

An astronaut travelled with us as a guide. He told us that it will take three days to reach the moon. I eagerly peeped through the window and saw colourful lights in the sky! Our astronaut said that Sunitha Williams the American-Indian astronaut also saw this and said that they are the northern lights!

When we landed on the moon, our astronaut got down first and led the way. I saw beautiful stars and they were as clear as crystals. Toffee and I were having fun, jumping and leaping! Suddenly, I saw something black in the sky. I asked our astronaut what was that and he said, "It is a black hole; we should not go near it as it will suck us and we will not return. I said "Oh my god! It is not good to go near it at all!"

Then I saw a blue and green ball in the space! I was thinking what it could be. My dad said, "what are you staring at? Don't you realise it's the Earth?" I was wonderstruck! Our guide called me and said, "Hi, my name is Charles; I will tell you a lot about the moon. Neil Armstrong the American astronaut was the first man to walk on the moon...would you like to see his footprints?". "What, how is that possible?" I asked in surprise. Charles said, "The footprints are still there as there is not enough wind to blow it away!" He then showed us the footprints!

We also saw craters and Charles said that the craters were once filled with ice and water. We went around the moon in a moon buggy, a small vehicle used for travel in the moon. I collected some moon rocks as I wanted to show it to my friends when I go back to the earth! I did not sweat at all as the air was very cold! Wow! I'd love to stay here throughout the summer!

Just as I was happily enjoying the moon walk; I heard someone shouting, "Sanju! Wake up fast! You need to go to your summer class!" I woke up startled and saw mom standing next to my bed. "Mom, we were in the moon. Don't you remember?" I asked. My mom said, "What, moon? What are you blabbering?" Then I said to myself "Oh! I think it's a dream!" Wow! What a beautiful dream!



## Four years with the Moonians

**Vichar R Lochan. Age 8**

I was having a nice relaxed time in school, reading an e-book, when the Social Science teacher suddenly strode in, and read out a list of six names. We were the few people chosen to take a trip to the moon!

We all got on to the school bus and went home to collect water and food for our trip. I packed a big bag with food, water, and plenty of books. We went to the Sriharikota Satellite Launch area. We put on ultra-light space-suits and climbed on to the rocket 'Garuda'.

I needed the use the restroom, so I told the astronaut who was looking after us. She told me that I had to be quick as we had very few seconds left for the countdown. I didn't hear this as I was already running towards the washroom. I was a bit late and as the rest of them were strapped into their bunks when the rocket took off they did not float upwards. I pretty much flew and bumped my head hard on the roof. I still have the bruise! I finally strapped myself into my bunk somehow and soon we reached the moon.

We had to wear cool, shiny helmets so that we would have enough oxygen to breathe. It was extremely pretty on the moon and I went exploring.

I came across a weird rock which kept hopping around. I grabbed it and took it back to show my friends. But, the rock suddenly got hotter and hotter in my hand. When I opened my hand to look at it, I saw that it had stopped hopping but was now glowing red. It was starting to scorch my hand a little, so I dropped it. Bad move! It exploded!

I saw that there were a bunch of tiny, bright green people with guns the size of toothpicks, walking around. I took them back to the camp. My friends were amazed to see the tiny people whom I named 'The Moonians.' We had a very good time with the Moonians, and we were all very sad when we had to return.



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But wait! There was something wrong with our rocket, and it refused to turn on. The astronaut got a message sent to the International Space Station (ISS), but they couldn't help us! Meanwhile, my friends and I were very happy to spend more time with the Moonians.

The Moonians then revealed that they had magical powers, and could help us have enough food, air, e-books and water. I suggested that they help fix our rocket and they agreed, but said that it would take many years. Four to be precise.

We were happy at the thought of not going to school for four years. The astronaut and my teacher have other plans though! They plan to teach us everything we need to know until eighth grade, because that's when we will be coming back to earth. This is 3023. See you guys in 3027!

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## Rains in the Moon!

**R.S. Aruna Age 10**

Everything started when I got my tickets to a trip to moon from a Luck draw. I started packing my things for my trip. I packed many things like solid powdery snacks, suites, cloths, tin shoes and few stones. I knew that our weight will be only 1/6th of our weight in earth. These stones would come handy.

Then I telephoned two of my friends, Suhana and Gayathri and invited them to the expedition. They agreed to join and we planned to start on 16th of May. Our teacher Miss Anna Sukelen also agreed to accompany us. Soon the day arrived and we were very excited.

We reached the place from where the rocket was supposed to be launched early in the morning. After a few formalities, we went inside the rocket. It was bit cramped, but looked awesome. Soon the rocket speared in to the atmosphere leaving behind a trail of smoke. We could not look through the windows. So we began reading books. As the speed of the rocket picked up, my stomach started churning and my friends teased me as being space sick.

After a brief delay, we landed on the moon. It took almost five hours, but seemed like 5 minutes. We landed near our space station. We went inside the station and started exploring it. In the space suit room we tried out our sizes. We then wore our suites and went out to play. I did collect some moon rocks as samples.

We could see the magnified Sun. We also saw the earth for the first time. It looked like a blue ball floating in space. It was time for dinner then. All meals in the moon seem to be dinner, as it was always night there. We sent to our bunkers to sleep after dinner.

I woke up and shook my other friends to get up. Suddenly it started raining. I was surprised as I know that it would not rain in moon. Then I realised that it was my father sprinkling water on my face to wake me up for another day of school.



## Moon walks and crater jumps

**Raghav Srivaths. Age 9**

I was reading the newspaper one day and an advertisement caught my eyes. It said –

CHILL OUT THIS SUMMER ON THE MOON ! Sign up for Moon Camp right away. We provide all the gear required. AGE LIMIT - 8-10 years. Last date to sign up – April 21, 2051. Only 1500 Earth dollars per head!!

Having already gone to the Mars the last two summers, I thought the Moon would be a nice change. My parents signed me up for the camp. We were to leave for the camp in May.

On the specified day, my parents dropped me off at the Chennai Space Centre at 8 am by hovercraft. I waved goodbye to them and told them that I would see them in three weeks. I was assigned to travel in spaceship number 6.

To my delight, I found that four of my school friends were to be with me on the trip. The man in charge ticked off our names on the register and sent us inside. An older astronaut was heading our group.

We were going to blast off in an hour. We strapped ourselves into our seats as the spaceship started to rumble and with a blast we shot off into outer space. We landed in less than two hours on the Moon. We wore our space suits before we exited the spaceship and we were shown to our respective rooms.

At the space station we met alien kids from other planets who were also part of the Moon camp. After lunch, we had to assemble in a hall where we introduced ourselves to each other. We were also given a list of activities which were planned for us during our stay there.

Later that evening we had a Moon walk race - whoever finished last won! It

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was really funny to see everyone trying to walk really slowly because of the low gravity.

We also had a crater jumping contest which the Kryptonians won hands down because of their 7 legs! We also had many other gravity defying games which were a lot of fun.

We went exploring during the day and took pictures of Earth with our space cameras. In the evenings we had space treasure hunts at the end of which we got our own moon rock souvenirs.

We also had camp fire nights but without the fire as there is no air on the moon. We told each other space ghost stories and had a good time. The three weeks flew by and it was time to go back home.

By the end of the camp we were good friends with a few of the Martians, Kryptonians, Uranians and the Plutonians. We promised to keep in touch with each other by space mail. On the whole, living on the moon was a wonderful experience and I would love to go there again next year.

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## A Moon Odyssey

***Apurva Narayan. Age 10***

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Yeh! Summer holidays have begun! Our classes are over and we are enjoying ourselves. My friends and I are on the Besant Nagar beach. We can see the sun setting and we run towards the waves that bring a little respite to the hot climate typical of Chennai during this time of the year.

Rani, Raj, Anu, Rohan, and I are just walking along the coast when suddenly, we saw a cave and went in. I feel my head going round and dizzy. I turn to my other friends and I see that Raj is on the floor while, Rani seems to be balancing herself by leaning on to the walls of the cave, I look towards Rohan and a bright light flashes across my eyes and I can feel myself going down.

I open my eyes and see that I am staring into space. I think I can hear voices and look to my left to see Rohan and Raj talking to each other. I get up and we all hug. Where are we...?

Meanwhile, Rohan discovers something like a switch and turns on lights in the supposedly room we found ourselves in. But, there is something very unique about this room, it is circular in shape. Rather it is a sphere. Rani and Anu come out of their forced sleep and we all realise that we are in a BUBBLE!

But, we are stationed somewhere on a solid ground. And what is that, I see the American flag ... where are we? We are on the MOON!

It was just this afternoon, after our school that we were discussing the latest invention by an Iranian scientist, a time machine, which allowed time transport and now it seems that all of us are in a science fiction.

A bunch of kids on the moon for summer seem like a far possibility.. We take turns to look through the telescope inside the bubble. We then spot our beautiful green-blue earth through this. While we are discussing things in

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general and deciding our next move, I spot some movement outside our bubble. It is a small living thing...an ALIEN...it is like a meerkat and is afloat on the atmosphere-less moon's surface and is holding on to the bubble and peering inside. It has eyes as big as saucers and in a matter of seconds, it opens a small door and is inside.

All of us crouch together with fright...however, our new visitor is actually observing us with surprise, for we are the intruders! We are in the alien's home. The alien calms all of us down and offers us some cool, minty tasting dessert having ice-cream consistency. It tells us that it could drop us back on earth on the new moon day on earth, but it would take a week.

We spend a week exploring the moon, and have lots of fun with Zoro, our moon friend. We space walk and moon walk, eat delicious food of and even play games. We teach Zoro to tie shoelaces and play knots and crosses.

After a week, Zoro, and his bubble fly to earth with us. The bubble lowers itself gently on to the sea water. The waves wash it ashore.

"Apu...APU.." someone was shaking and calling me. I was lying on the beach sand and apparently had taken a nice nap while my friends had gone shell hunting in the cave. I walked back home with them, thinking about our friend, Zoro and the moon odyssey.

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## The Moon of Cheese

**M. Deepak Srinivas. Age 9**

Right now, you are reading an adventure from N.A.S.A files. My name is Akash and I'm nine years old and my father is a NASA scientist

This thrilling but dangerous adventure started on April 9th, the last day of the school. I walked back to my home along with my friends. I hit the doorbell switch and the door opened.

Now, of course, this is the first part of my house - My dad's research lab. It was filled with info like 'the moon is also known as LUNA or ARTEMIS'. My dad was in his usual pose, rolling a chart. "What's inside it?", I asked. "Oh! Hey Akash! I never saw you! There's a chart of the new space shuttle, Artemis Trace 701. I handle the electricity," he said. "Wow! Can I come?!" Dad stared at me blankly. "No! It is very dangerous. I will not be back for – uh... 3 months." I frowned. I had tears in the back but held them back.

I had a plan. On April 10th we saw our dad working in the spaceship. I had a box with a tarantula trapped inside which I had brought from the pet shop. I threw at the security guard. He got spooked out. I darted beside him. I took the elevator up and ran into the spaceship. Then I heard it. "Artemis Trace 701 is ready for take off into space." I saw myself leaving the earth. I grabbed an astronaut suit with a sigh of relief.

We came across a giant wall of rocks named – Asteroids. Soon we reached the moon. I surprised my dad. Then I realised I shouldn't have done it. My Dads face was becoming red. But then he tapped me, "Brave boy!"

My dad took out a small tool and pressed a button. It turned the moon yellowish white and I realised it was cheese! I started eating it up. I started jumping and the moon was pulling me back to the ground. I poured water and they started separating everywhere. There was PSP and yummy food set for us. And there was a cosy bed. Living in the moon was fun. Two months later we left for the earth. Spending a summer holiday on the moon was worth the summer vacation here!

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## Cycle with nature

**Ananya Balaji. Age 11**

If I had two days to roam around Chennai in a cycle, I would wake up early in the morning of the first day and buck up for the journey. I would take my cycle key, water bottle, food, watch, money, sunglasses and my hat.

I love nature and would love to cover parks and beaches. I would set off at 6 a.m. from my house in Thiruvanmiyur and would first go to theosophical society. On my way I would take a sip of water. I would enjoy the nature there for some time and then would set off to go to my favourite temple Kapaliswarar temple. On my way if I am hungry I would go to Karpagambal mess and eat a nice and yummy dosa.

From there I would go to the Birla planetarium and learn about space and aircrafts. Then would go to Anna Centenary Library and pour through books, my favourite pastime. I would then eat my lunch. I would then go home and take some rest. At the evening I would go to Marina beach riding the cycle with my parents and I would enjoy the sunset then go back home and sleep early to get up for the next journey.

I would wake up at 5.30 a.m. next day and check if my cycle has air and is in good condition to ride long. I would then take my things and set off to the IIT campus and enjoy the beautiful nature with dears, birds and trees and would eat my breakfast in the IIT canteen.

I would then go to the Egmore museum and learn about the past. Since it is summer I would take sips of water and tender coconut whenever possible. I would go to Semozhi poonga to see beautiful trees and fountains. I would then go to Saravana Bhavan and eat iddiapam with kurma, mm.. my all time favourite.

After a short rest I would call my friends and cycle to Elliots beach and play in the sand and the water and then go home and crash in the bed to sleep. What fun two days it would be! Wish it comes true.



## Flying bicycle

***Khushi Suraj. Age 12***



It was my twelth birthday. All my friends, relatives and my grandparents arrived to celebrate my day. My grandparents gifted the latest Ladybird Bicycle. I was very excited and immediately took it out for a ride.

Suddenly, in my backyard, I saw a funny looking plant with some wings and a wheels. I bent down to have a look at it, and I was shocked to see a fairy coming out of it. The fairy looked at me and said, 'I am Lilac. I come from the planet Caratune. I have two days of holidays and I have come to look around your beautiful city, Chennai.' She saw my cycle and said, "Wow, you have a beautiuil machine with big wheels. Can you take me to all the beautiful places in Chennai on it?" I started laughing. I told her, "This is a small cycle, and Chennai is so big. How can I take you around the city in two days?" She just smiled and went inside her house and came back with a magic ointment and applied it on my bicycle.

Suddenly, as I rode my bicycle, it started flying in the sky. We got an aerial view of Chennai.

Since she wanted to see animals, I first rode to Guindy Park. It was just 10 a.m. and since Lilac knew the language of the animals she spoke for a long time with the caged animals and felt very sorry for their pitiable state. Around 1.p.m. we felt very hungry so I rode to the famous Murugan Idly Joint and we had hot sweet pongal and yummy idlis with sambar and variety of chutney.

It was around 2 p.m. now. I then took her to Express Avenue Mall. She was delighted to see such a big mall. Then I took her to the theatres and we saw the movie 'Endhiran'. The movie was over in two hours. We then decided to go to Queensland Amusement Park. I took her on all the scary rides but she thoroughly enjoyed herself there.

Next day I took her to see the sunrise in Marina Beach. She played for a long



time in the water, made some sand castles, collected some sea-shells and finally even ate hot bajjis on the sea-shore.

She then wanted to visit the beautiful Santhome Church near Marina. Lilac saw the marvellous church and listened to the beautiful prayer meeting and heard the wonderful choir. She was very happy.

Then we went to Kapaleeshwar temple. We saw the temple and prayed for a long time inside it. We did a little shopping too.

The next day morning I woke up and rushed to my backyard. Lilac and her house had disappeared. How much ever I tried, my cycle never rose up in the air. It all felt like a wonderful dream but nevertheless I had travelled all around Chennai on my cycle that too in two days and I felt extremely happy about the whole adventure.



## Confident ride

***Divya Teresa B. Age 12***



Biking alone for two days! The very thought of it makes me excited as well as scared. But it was my idea and I am not backing out of it now, not after all the struggle I went through to convince my parents. Besides, I told myself, it'll be a blast.

Beep....beep....beep....It was 5 a.m. Time to get dressed and begin my journey. I started at 6 in the morning to avoid the heavy traffic. I waved a cheery goodbye to my parents and was off with a strange feeling bubbling up in me.

I had a compact tent strapped to the back of my bicycle, enough food for breakfast and money for emergencies. I am heading first to the Ripon building. I spent about two hours looking at the building and eating my breakfast – hot dosas and sambar. Suddenly as I was looking at the building, I saw a tiny snout peer out from the side. Curiously, I went around the building and saw a tiny jet black puppy. Gently I lifted him into my hands. I decided to take him along with me. I named him Ash.

Then I was off again. This time with Ash nestling in my basket. I was heading to the Chennai port. I reached the port and spent most of the afternoon there looking at the various container ships, oil tankers, cargo ships, cruise liners etc. I went over to one of the shops and bought some lunch and sat enjoying the seaside view with Ash.

I had carefully planned my route so I'd be at the broken bridge for a special view that lay in store around 6 p.m. I was awaiting the sunset. I scanned the sky eagerly...and then suddenly, I saw it. A big ball of fire, glowing red, orange and yellow against a pinkish purple background. I lost myself completely in that beautiful, serene view with Ash beside me.

Slowly I started towards Elliott's beach to join the hunt for turtle eggs introduced by the Students' Sea Turtle Conservation Network. I first had to



get a goodnight's sleep as the walk would begin at midnight. I put up my tent on the beach and crawled into it. I woke up sharp at midnight.

I walked along with the conservation volunteers and after a long search we found two turtle eggs and handed them over to the turtle conservation.

After breakfast, Ash and I had a great time playing and chasing each other in the sea. Then I headed towards my next destination – Adyar banyan tree. I spent the rest of the afternoon with the ancient tree among its enormous roots, taking notes, drawing sketches and swinging on the roots. Then I was off again to the final place of my trip – The Madras War Cemetery. I spent the evening looking over each of the graves – studying the names engraved, thinking of their lives and their sacrifice for our country.

It was then time to return home. As I rode under the starry sky, I thought - usually riding like this at night would creep me out, but now I feel that this trip has changed me; made me stronger, braver, more independent. Now I know my city a little better. Now I know what I can do. And now, I know myself.



## Full of fun and food

**S. Aditya Narayan. Age 12**



On April 13th, I had won the cricket tournament, so my father had bought me a Hercules Red Gear cycle. The bicycle has of 18 gears! My father gave me the permission to go anywhere in Chennai for the next two days.

On April 14th, at 5 a.m I started to ride from my home in Perambur. The first place I visited with my new cycle was my friend's house at Ayanavaram. My friend brought his bicycle and together we went to a local park, 1 Km from my friend's house. For the next three hours, we played Badminton. After the game, we cycled to the famous south Indian restaurant Sangeetha, located 4 Km from the park. Being a Sunday, the roads were mostly free of traffic and we were able to reach the restaurant in 20 minutes.

After breakfast, it was 9 a.m. With our cycles, we went to our maths tuition at Kilpauk. Riding all along, at 1 p.m. we felt like there was a big rat in our stomachs. We went in our bicycles to the famous fast-food joint McDonalds. There, we ate a Mc SpicyPaneer (Burger) and had a coke too. My friend had one Mc AlooTikki and one coke. We both shared one pack of French Fries.

After lunch, at 2 p.m. we cycled to the Express Avenue mall. There I bought one pair 'Adidas' shoes. We went to the famous game center 'Fun City' and bought a card worth Rs 300. From the games won, we got 546 tickets. Then we watched Tamil film 'Thuppaki'. After the film it was 8:00 p.m. For dinner we went to 'Pizza Hut' in the mall. After our dinner, we went back to our house in our cycles.

The next day my mother woke me up at 8 a.m and said that is was my sister's birthday and there is going to be a party. I gladly accepted to conduct the party. I was confused as I had not decided on the birthday gift for my sister. Then an idea struck me about presenting her with the big Teddy Bear, which I saw in EA. For that, I had to win 1000 tickets in Fun City.



With the help of my cycle, I raced to EA. There I upgraded my card for Rs. 400. Finally I got the balance 454 tickets and won the Teddy Bear. Afterwards I bought all the items for decoration and the goodies. Sharp at 6 p.m., I was done with all the decorations and the party began. All my friends, my sister's friends and my relatives came to the party. Thanks to my Father, for the cycle. I was able to organise the party well.

The two days were hectic but I did not feel the pain and the cycling was comfortable.



## Beach and beyond

**Akshaya Murali. Age 13**



On the first day I woke up at 5'0 clock in the morning and started roaming in Chennai with my bicycle. That morning first I went to Marina beach. While I was riding my cycle and there was nice breeze and I saw the sunrise and it was mind blowing. And I was so excited to see the sunrise from the start.

After sometime I went along the Beach road and one of my friends accompanied me and we both started riding together along the beach and when we were crossing slum areas the children were following us and I was so sad to see them and felt so sorry for them. We had a small conversation with them and went ahead.

Next I went to see the MLA of the area and just told them about what I saw and they told they would surely see through that and they thanked me for informing about the issue. And then my friend and I left from there and then we went to take a look of the malls at Chennai like Citi Centre and Express Avenue. And rode down all the way to the Phoenix Mall, opened recently at Velachery. We returned only for the dinner.

The next day I went to a recently released movie in the morning that is KAI POCHE and then we went to restaurant and had our lunch and after that we went to Anna Centenary Library and then we went to Landmark (book store). In the evening there was some magic show and went up until night and it was amazing.

After that we went to a five star hotel to have our dinner and met my old friends and then it was night and so we had to go and I went to my friend's place and dropped her there and just went to my house...and it was a great journey around Chennai. It was just awesome!



## All around Chennai

**G. Shree Varsha. Age 12**

The thought captured my mind when I was lying on the bed awake. I wanted to feel the real fun of camping out. I also wanted to spend my weekend with fun, frolic and learning.

I thought of various places in Chennai, both historical and modern. I had a good sleep and woke-up early in the morning. I planned the timing and places. I decided to go there in my bicycle.

I first rode my bicycle to Egmore Government Museum. Wow! It was fantastic. I saw the bones of dinosaur. I thought of giving life to it but I knew that it is impossible. I saw the Mamoth bones also. I really enjoyed studying about numismatics and different properties of the ancient kings. I was astonished in seeing those sharp and sophisticated weapons. It has a lot of Amaravathi paintings. I went to kids corner and discovered my joy. I just felt like I was in the bronze age when I went to the archaeology corner. I realised the advancement of the world when I visited the technology corner.

Next, I went to Marina beach. When I stepped on the sand it felt disgusting. Here and there it was filled with numerous pollutants. So, I decided to make it a pleasant place. I put up a board there - Green Revolution is the best solution to arrest pollution'. I took a bag and collected all the waste and plastic bags. A few children also joined with me to march towards the green world. I felt rather very proud. I played in the blue water and explored there. Then, I saw the beach and it was very clean and safe.

Afterwards, I went to the Guindy National Park where I saw lot of animals and birds. The park is home to 130 species of birds, and 14 species of mammals and 60 species of butterflies. It had many threatened species also. I loved to see those colourful butterflies. I saw the spotted dear that hopped very beautifully. I saw the grey pelican too. Then, I saw the porcupine and was surprised to its tentacles. I saw many vipers. They were rather dangerous and interesting too.



I also went to the Kapaleeswarar temple that reflects the Hindu culture and tradition. Its architecture was a great fantasy. The name of the area where the temple was developed got its name from Mayil - Peacock. The ride was long and I was very tired. So, I went home and wrote notes on all the places I visited.

The next morning, I decided to go to the Birla Planetarium where I saw the model of aeroplane and many other scientific objects. People working there took me towards the theatre and I saw many virtual stars displayed there. My seat was moving and I thought that I was in space. I learned lot of things about space.

Next, I went to Valluvar Kottam. A beautiful place built in memory of the Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar. It is in the form of a temple chariot. Its architecture is significant. Thirukkural verses are inscribed on the walls. I read all of them and understood the meanings. I returned home and wrote a detailed account. It was my best experience and memorable in my life.



## A quick trip around the city

***Gayathrie Sunil. Age 11***

Two days to roam In Chennai, a bicycle - these thoughts raced in my mind. I had so many places in my mind that I wanted to see! Egmore museum the first place that came in my mind.

I ran across the yard grabbed my bicycle and raced towards the museum. On the way I bought a tender coconut. In the museum I was fascinated by the displays. The place was huge, but I liked the sea creature room the best. I looked outside and was amazed to see it was already night. How quickly time had flown!

I called my friend and asked what restaurant she would suggest and she suggested the Tryst Cafe for dinner. I peddled to the cafe and had dinner. I went home and slept peacefully.

The next day I had my breakfast at the Tryst Cafe again. The breakfast was wonderful and the flavour seemed to last forever. Then I went to the Anna Centenary Library the place was so huge with 9 floors. And it has more than a billion books!

I was starving after all the going around. Thankfully there was a food court in the library. After eating I decided that I should go to Marina beach. Once I arrived I knew that this beach must be the biggest urban beach in India.

I looked around. The beach was very crowded as it was the centre of attraction in summer. I went to Hotel Taj and also had dinner there. I could not believe that the two days had ended so fast, because, for me it only seemed like minutes. I long to travel in my bicycle again.



## **Guided by game**

**Sherwin Jose Philip. Age 13**

Tick Tock Tick Tock. The clock's ticking as I finished my last word of the last exam. "O god I can't wait to go home". I was waiting impatiently. Tring goes the bell. I submitted my paper and ran out of the exam hall. All were playing and enjoying after the exam. but I ran straight to my van.

I reached home, had some water and went upstairs. I saw my dad doing his office work. "Remember our promise?" he was busy in his work and so replied "Yes". My dad said in a gruff voice. I went to my bedroom and changed my uniform. Dad had promised me to get me a bicycle after I secure the top grades in all my exams.

I went down to play computer games.I switched on the computer, clicked GTA Chennai city. The game started. I sat on a bike and roamed around Chennai. Vroom Vrooom.... went the sound of the bike. I went to the Marina beach, got down from my bike and went to the beach. Then I rode across the Kathipara Flyover. I went down the bridge and rode till I reached Aminjakarai.

I saw the Ampa Skywalk mall which I had always wanted to see in reality. Then I went to the Elliot's Beach and saw the Karl Schmidt memorial. I pressed the Esc Button clicked-quit game. I shut down the computer.

Next day I went to the T.I Cycles factory outlet and bought a new Hercules roadeo with the gears. "Thanks Dad" I said. I have one more surprise for you said dad. "What is it?" I asked eagerly. He said I would be given two days to roam around Chennai.

I remembered the game I played and made my mind to visit all the places that I visited in the game. Next I started my visit from Marina Beach , it was pleasant and cool to ride on the heavy traffic road, I reached Mylapore, visited the Santhome Church and passed over Edward Elliot's Beach and saw the Karl Schmidt memorial. By day end I became very tired. The next day as per the game which I played I roamed Chennai and enjoyed myself. I went back home happily.

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## Rendezvous with nature

**Malavika Unnikrishnan. Age 12**

Two days of travelling in Chennai on a bicycle! What a treat ! 48 hours of peace of mind and freedom. I would cram Rs. 2000 in my pocket and set off on a tour in and around Chennai. Mind you, I am a quake bottom while cycling. So it isn't one of my comforts. However, I would go to Hotel Saravana Bhavan and have a Masala Dosa, the king of Dosas, after praying to Lord Shiva at Kapaleeshwarar Temple in Mylapore.

Surely being in Chennai, without watching a Tamil movie would be a waste of time. So, I would set off to the Express Avenue next. After eating ice-cream, candy floss, watching an action packed thriller and shopping in Lifestyle, I would move on to the Marina beach next. Buying a kite and flying it in the air, while the waves slap against my heels, is something that I would love to do.

Then I would cycle (with many groans!) to a shop called 'Bombay Lassi' to eat hot samosas in the evening.

The second day would be dedicated for a rendezvous with nature. I would start the day with a visit to the horticultural park on R K Salai where I would learn about the different species of plants and trees.

The next stop would be the head office of the Tree Foundation, where I would offer my little contribution in preserving the turtle population. After having a pizza at Domino's, I would set off to the Guindy National Park where I would spend the rest of the day enjoying the company of the wild creatures. After this tiring yet entertaining journey through Chennai's cobbled, bustling streets and busy main roads, I would reach home with a happy mind and jocund energy pounding through my veins.



## **Scary yet adventurous**

**Nivetha Srinath. Age 11**

It was Saturday, a warm sunny morning. I was bouncing on my bed thinking how my vacation was going to be. I got ready for breakfast and was at the dining table waiting for hot-hot *pooris*. My dad came to the dining table with the newspaper. I asked my dad if we could go abroad but he said that he would be very busy with office work. I slumped into my chair thinking this would be the worst vacation ever!

My dad tapped my shoulder and asked me to come to the garage on finishing my breakfast. I nodded my head. I finished my breakfast and zoomed to the garage and LO! He had bought me a beautiful light pink cycle. I loved it. I hugged my parents and thanked them.

I looked at my cycle for sometime and then went to my room and browsed the internet for a while. My dad knocked the door and said that I could roam in Chennai for two days. I was dumbfounded by his words and gazed at him but I uttered the word "okay" and was yelling and screaming my heads off in excitement.

I began packing my haversack and suitcase. I thought that I would be alone and bored so I called my two buddies Harshini and Dharshini .They agreed to come with me. We said ta-ta and sped in our cycles.

Our first stop was Egmore museum. We saw many things but began to feel hungry. We went to Radisson Blu Ray, and made our stomachs pipe down. Then we rode down to places like the Semmozhi Poonga, Marina beach, Besant Nagar Beach, Guindy park. By then it was dark.

My friends and I were really scared and sped in our cycles as fast as we could. I noticed that we were in Tambaram. We cycled really fast. and we ended up in a spooky forest. We placed our cycles near each other. We put our tent and fire and ate our dinner. We talked, danced and had a lot of fun. We slept in our king-size tent cozily. The next morning we found our way and went to our homes. It was an exciting adventure!





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## Make Namma Chennai Proud

**Anirudh Madhavan. Age 14**

The task of being asked to think upon as to how to redesign such a huge and bustling city like Chennai is indeed not an easy task. Redesigning Chennai must be done carefully, as well as with care to better the lives of its people.

For starters, we must improve the traffic situation. We must focus on eliminating traffic by launching a metro service, which of course is going to happen shortly. But that idea must be taken a step further, and we must integrate the bus, train and auto services into one unified organisation. If this is done, then people can efficiently travel across all parts of the city with no hassle.

The city of Chennai can go green by having special lanes for cyclists, cutting traffic as well as pollution. These would be the first two steps I would take to redesign Chennai.

The next two, however, will have more implications on the city. The first of these involves the re-designing of the skyline. Chennai's skyline is rather blank now, and it could well do with a couple of skyscrapers, that boost the city's style statement. The next step would be to increase the city's green cover, to balance the growth of skyscrapers.

In redesigning the city, its main rivers, Adyar, Cooum and the Buckingham Canal must be cleaned and restored to their original purity.

Further, the city of Chennai's airport could be re-designed, as the city can grow, only if there is business going on with other regions. Air serves as the principal medium through which foreigners, get to the "Gateway of South India". The airport must be re-designed, and though it is upgraded just now, further plans down the road must be put in place.

Further, though this exercise may involve thousands, it is essential to completely clean out the city and keep it tidy from then on. It is essential



that we have a dumping area safe and secluded from the city, where there is no biological life. Further, bio-degradable substances must be re-used and recycled, to boost conservation.

I would place a couple of giant parks with lush greenery and a path for people to walk upon. It could be placed at the focal point of the city, This could resemble the Hyde Park in London, world famous today.

I would also set up a public square for people to socialise and important events to take place. I would focus on children and launch more sports academies with an aim to develop better talent. I would also ensure that the city's citizens have clean, healthy water at all times.

The city must be made disaster-proof, allowing for evacuations when in need. Earthquake and disaster detection systems must be able to quickly alert citizens. I would also place a massive market that would not just sell fruits or vegetables but also spices, handicrafts, attracting scores of people, day in and day out, in the huge square park.

I would also improve the city's design by focusing on key vital aspects, such as navigability. The streets must be more user-friendly. I would re-design the city to ensure that when people visit "Namma Chennai", they are not left with a desire for more, but will leave, wanting their cities to be like Chennai.

There are some things that must be left untouched, such as the Marina Beach, the Anna Centenary Library as well as the Chennai Central, because they are symbols of this city's beauty, diversity and culture.

Though I want, in my design of Chennai, a city that is less-crowded in public areas and more civilised, there are exceptions as we need to remember that the rushing scores of people behaving in a not- so western style civilised manner in certain public places are a testament to the bustling Indian way of life, which the world has fallen in love with. The east has finally stopped trying to copy the west, and the west has started to learn from us. I hope my re-designing of the city will balance the west and east in perfect harmony, to make Chennai, one of the world's admired societies, where the true spirit of mankind is realised.





## Restore Heritage, history and health

**P.S. Nandini. Age 16**

Chennai has close to 3000 water bodies of which an embarrassingly small fraction contain something which at least remotely resembles what one calls water. With the rising heat and the threat of water scarcity, the very first step in redesigning Chennai would be to cleanse and transform into strategic navigational routes the city's famously clogged and polluted water bodies including the once functional and highly useful Buckingham Canal and Cooum River.

If such a major action plan is ever to see daylight, the ever-branching and successfully proliferating slum encroachments on the shores of these water bodies will have to be permanently relocated with no hint of a later day return. That brings up the frightening thought of exactly by how much our growing population's needs overshoot the available resources.

Space, once considered to be humongous and unending, is extremely scarce in Chennai. So with an unimaginable influx of roadway traffic, cyclists just have to have their share of space in the form of cycle lanes. After all they are doing a whole lot of good to the polluted air curtaining our city!

So are the pedestrians, who are largely forgotten when the roads are designed. Chennai's notorious platforms which are best described by the 3 Ds (Dark, Dingy and Dirty) will be adequately mended and widened with railings installed to keep off motorists wishing to jump the waiting lines at the signals.

Illegal parkings and pavement encroachments will be permanently cleared up. The scarcely present pedestrian crossings will be quantitatively increased and further provided with a manual signal stopping button at either end to enable people to momentarily stop the traffic and reach the other side without any incident.



Public toilets with state-of-the-art sanitation facilities and improved accessibility will be setup under the joint public-private partnership. The next plan to hit the road will be the quantisation of auto fares from and to all local destinations which will have to be obeyed by all citizens wishing to ride on an auto.

Further, certain heritage areas in the city which have etched themselves a place in history ,such as the four maada veedhis of Mylapore, will be made 'No Vehicle Zones' which can be accessed only by pedestrians to keep out interfering traffic and preserve the rich and rare taste and feel of the places. Vehicles will have to be left behind at parking spaces outside the Zone which will also be plotted out.

Talking of history reminds one of the innumerable difficulties elders face in navigating across a city which has so far proved to be dead hostile towards the older end of the spectrum in all respects. As a basic right they will be provided with elder-friendly pavements and low floored buses with wheelchair-friendly slopes.

Finally as a means of addressing the city atmosphere's diabolic Respirable Suspended Particulate Matter (RSPM ) rates, greenery will be planted across Chennai keeping in mind the Local Tree Species Ratio, Winged visitors' frequency, soil nature, prevailing external conditions (temperature, humidity) and resource availability of each locality/municipality.

One may therefore believe with hope and hope with belief that Chennai will one day become the best place to be in!





## Cooum to become Cauvery!

**Rohit K.R. Age 14**

I would definitely grab the opportunity to redesign Chennai City. The hardships that people face will be brought to an end. To begin with health and hygiene, the first and foremost task will be solid waste management. Strict rules will not only be made but those people who do not follow them will also be punished severely. All streets and public places will be a 'NO PLASTIC ZONE'. Separate collection of biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes will also be implemented and officials will routinely patrol all areas to ascertain that the rules are followed. CCTV cameras will be installed and fines would be collected from offenders.

Next on my list would be the issue of traffic congestion on city roads. Multilevel flyovers would be constructed so that the base level would be allotted for cyclists and pedestrians. The upper levels would be categorised as specific for Two-wheelers, Four-wheelers and Six-wheelers. Toll free numbers will be given to commuters to report any anti-social activity.

The next would be the beautification of Chennai to convert it into 'Singara Chennai'. Waterways will be cleaned up and free saplings would be given to all the citizens of this metropolitan city. School children will be made an important part in planting saplings and ensuring greenery. Awards will be given to individuals and groups who do their part in maintaining a green and clean neighbourhood.

Many parks, playgrounds and areas of green cover would be developed so that the quality of air would be improved; Children could also spend their leisure time playing outdoor games as in today's Chennai, there is lack of open areas.

Multi-level parking lots would be introduced in shopping areas so that traffic congestion would be reduced. Cycling tracks would be laid and cycle



booths would be constructed in all areas where cycles would be rented for free – people could use cycles whenever they need them and could return them at booths.

Trees will be planted at all bus stops and pavements so that people could stand in shade during afternoon hours. More Garbage bins would be kept in all areas. Roads would be re-laid by mixing unwanted plastic with tar.

All polluted rivers would be cleaned and Cooum will become the Cauvery of Chennai. Clean drinking water will be made available free of cost at definite booths.

Chennai has a lot of religious places and tourist spots. They will be renovated to make our city a world famous tourist destination.

All these redesigning will make Chennai into a much sought after city and we Chennaites will be proud to be its residents. "Swargamey ponnalam...athu namma Chennai pole varuma...!"





## All for my dream city

**B.Yasaswени. Age 14**

If only I get the chance of redesigning the city, I would turn Chennai into such a place that all the wonders would be ruled out and Chennai be the one and only wonder!

All the slum areas would be cleared and cleaned to set right for redesigning and they would be given better accommodation and job facilities.

I would divide Chennai into different sections. But every person can have access to all the sections. One would be the peaceful natural place where nature lovers can wander there, rich biodiversity, flora and fauna would be filled in there. Adventure lovers would have the place sort of amusement park with zigzag roads, skaters, skiing and whatever people need but all with safety precautions only.

One side it is the working division where people work hard in business and trade to get into a vacation of peace and adventure.

All the rules and regulations would be automated and if anybody disobeys they would caught in iron hands of robot guards.

I would create a mini Ozone above Chennai to obstruct harmful rays and to avoid direct exposure to Sun I would vacate all the pathogens and viral insects and pests for better health. I would improve the situation of all industries.

I would create a design such that no person would feel worried about his life and never await for death. To invest in these plan I would use the Government Treasury for people's welfare and when it is developed I would refill the Treasury more than what it was before.

I would bring in technology to right use in hands of people and improve intelligent young minds for betterment of the nation. I would bring all



people in Chennai more or less under one economic, political and social group. Poor would never be poor and rich would never be rich; everybody would be economically good.

The garbage and all the waste would be recycled thoroughly and make all arrangement to make it clean and clear ever. Fresh air and greenery would be in one hand and technology and inventions would be in other hand.

I would create a balance in nature and technology where all the organisms including people would be united in harmony. I think if I have a chance I would turn a few of my dreams to reality at least to some extent.





## Invite people to be involved

***Shivani Chiranjeevi. Age 14***

If I were to redesign Chennai city I would implement widening of roads. The overall ambience of Chennai is congested. Widening of roads would be a solution for this issue. The standard of the road conditions in Chennai has always been abysmal which has been paving way for stagnation.

Proper sewage disposal is a vital element for a well-developed society. Chennai is one of the cities that lacks this basic facility. So ensuring this would be a good resolution.

People who visit Chennai complain of electricity shortage. This persists especially in the remote areas where people receive electricity supply for a few hours whereas people in the well developed urban areas are provided with power back-up, the very next second there is a power-cut. Power back-up is usually provided with the help of gasoline or diesel. This results in the wastage of fossil fuels. Electricity supply must be sufficient for everyone. This could be done by developing power plants especially in the areas that lack electricity.

The next thing which is lacking in Chennai is proper water supply. I would ensure equal distribution of clean drinking water in remote as well as in urban areas.

Health plays a crucial role in one's life. Constructing primary health centers at the rural levels and hospitals at the urban levels would be extremely essential for the people. The intention of constructing health centers and hospitals is to promote health in remote, backward as well as in urban regions.

Building overpasses would make transport easy which would seem much useful for office and school-goers. I would also implement measures for traffic calming. This would be a major contribution to make Chennai, an



accident-free city. Traffic calming includes safety measures like placing obstacles, so that drivers are forced to slow down.

The next thing is over-usage of fossil fuels. This has contributed to the fluctuating prices of fuels. So, making the best use of solar energy would be a good solution.

Planting saplings would put an end to the environmental issues in the city. For all these aspects people's involvement is absolutely necessary. If people's involvement is present, Chennai would be one of the best places to live in.



## Clean and green city

**Samyuktha. Age 14**

The wind blew on my face as my family and I took a long drive around the capital of Tamil Nadu. Looking out the car window, I thought about the variety of things I would change if I was given a chance to redesign Chennai.

Chennai is a coastal city cherished by thousands for its many opportunities, education, culture and food. Recreating this city would take a lot of effort since there is so much to start with.

First, there is the traffic jams. The city is loved by so many, its population has shot up so high! Everyone needs means of transport these days but when they all use their cars and motorcycles it causes air pollution and there is not enough space to budge even an inch without being stopped by another vehicle.

If this issue is to be solved, bridges soaring high into the sky should be constructed. The roads should also be expanded and suitable sidewalks should be created for the security of the people. There isn't much space for expanding the roads but if you move all the roadside shops to an alternative place, then certainly there would not be any problems.

Second, is the style of the city. Most of the metropolitan cities have skyscrapers, buildings which are big enough for parking lots and decent shops which do not just look like a pile of cardboard. If I was allowed to redesign Chennai I would make sure it is the jewel of them all.

I know that if all these roadside shops are destroyed these would be a huge economic crisis. That is why I would design better, cleaner and attractive shops for them at a different place that is convenient for them.

Silver buildings are slowly coming up all over India and Chennai must have them too. Would it not be cool if people came to our Chennai, instead of



visiting New York, Chicago or Dubai? Remodeling these buildings will consequently bring the full 'Beautiful City' image but we do need a little help from the government for these changes to come true.

Well, even if the city is beautiful,clean, neat and organised, there is just one, teensy little requirement - recreation! Chennaites usually spend their time at the beaches, restaurants, temples and the movies but after some time, continuously going to these places does get boring. My design of Madras would include many amusement parks which are not too far away, beautiful gardens and parks for the children and of course many libraries.

I believe and know that trees are a very important part of our livelihood and without them nothing is possible. I would make sure trees are planted every metre away. Our city would look green and fresh.

Last but not least is the purity of living. I would adore sprucing up Chennai, making it a tidy city for everyone to enjoy their stay here. While designing the city I would make sure there are visible trash bins at every street. People should be aware that polluting and littering the city would never bring it up to the expectations of 'One of the world's greatest cities'. So, if I was given a chance to redesign Chennai, keeping in mind the safety and interest of its' people I am sure everyone would love it. As I read over my ideas of how to make Chennai better, I smiled to myself knowing that one day everything will become true.



## Modern yet traditional

**Mercy Teres Johny. Age 15**

If I were to redesign Chennai city, I would definitely restore the heritage buildings which have been destructed mercilessly. Such valuable and precious buildings, which have been the storehouse of rich culture, tradition and beauty, must not be torn apart. These ancestral buildings have been the pride of the people living in the mid 80's and 90's, and destroying such buildings even for the metro rail construction is unpardonable.

Adding to this, I must say that the number of parks and afforested areas have decreased to a devastating number. Reminiscent of the days when I was a child at the tender age of seven, clutching the hands of my parents, admiring the lush greenery as I walked down a park, I fail to see such natural beauty of trees and bushes in increasing number nowadays. Hence, I would make sure I would increase the number of such areas around the city.

It is not only the buildings and the parks which need to be given importance, but also the rivers around the city. The Cooum river and the Buckingham canal have long been the sites of pollution and waste. Their importance is ignored, and the people have no hesitation in throwing wastes into such waterways, thereby polluting it to an even more hazardous situation. Such rivers need to be cleaned and utilised in a healthy way.

Apart from the changes regarding nature and heritage buildings, I would build more schools for the spread of education, especially in the slums, where most of the young people are deprived of their basic rights to education.

Along with the construction of schools, it would be a pleasure to see that the poverty ridden people have a home of their own, since most of them spend their life on the streets, with their homes restricted to horrendous places like pavements and roads. Their rights are denied and it is sad to



see that they are not valued as human beings and are pointedly ignored. Their lives are trampled upon by cruelty, sadness and poverty. Therefore, I would make sure that such social issues are addressed, so that these people have a life led by happiness and freedom.

Laying aside all social and environmental changes I would make, Chennai is yet a beautiful city, famous for its heritage passed down through ages by its ancestors. It is a city of happiness and joy, regardless of the boundaries that separates the people by luxury and poverty. The people in Chennai are warm and friendly, with an open heart, and make tourists visiting our city feel at home.

Chennai, famous for its hot, steaming idlis and the graceful dance, Bharatanatyam, is a city of simplicity, heritage, beauty, happiness, and is yet a city that boasts of it's modernity and development. I am a proud citizen of India and a proud resident of Chennai. Regardless of the small changes this city needs, it will always remain the modern yet traditional Chennai, 'namma' Chennai.

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## Bring in a better trash disposal

***Shreya Sarathy. Age 14***

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Chennai isn't the City of Heaven as of now - it's overcrowded, polluted and dank at its worst, with dodgy corners and shady areas that are best avoided. It can be unsafe and hostile, and there's a good chance that newcomers who don't know what to expect will be snapped up like fish in an ocean of sharks.

All that being said, Chennai has it's bright side- it's not hell. The bustling streets are always full of life and there's entertainment in just watching the ongoing activities of the city.

Chennai has a rich cultural heritage which instills a sense of pride in all who belong to this historical city. If I got the opportunity to redesign Chennai, I would start with the streets. They are now a pain to navigate through and are even bigger pain to travel on. Many of the smaller roads are filled with potholes, bumps and cracks. Many people seem to live by the motto 'bigger is better' when it comes to buying cars, but not when it comes to choosing roads to drive on, leading to huge traffic jams. I would first repave the roads so that the 'rocky road' problem is eradicated - it would mean much smoother travel.

Proper signposts would also be installed, so that people would actually know where they were going. Smaller roads - the ones where bigger vehicles are liable to get stuck - will be monitored so that only vehicles of a specified size will be able to enter.

Another major issue is too many people, too little space! The housing of the people living on the streets would be a priority for me. If unused living quarters were refurnished, they would house a large percentage of the homeless population. Houses would also be constructed on the bare land around the city. These people would be assisted in finding employment so that they could support themselves. Lots of sections of the city are highly

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unsafe and nobody - especially females- dare to travel at night.

Police patrols here would minimise danger. In addition to this, alarm buttons situated at various places around the city would make sure that the city would be a safer place.

Street lights in all areas would have to be fixed as well so that no part of the city would be truly 'shady' even at night.

Garbage disposals would come next. People throw all their trash on the side of the road. It has come to the stage where you can't look to the side of the road without seeing any trash! A trash disposal system would solve this. Seeing as nobody seems to want to use the trash cans which are already in place, a sewage-like disposal system would be more effective.

A tunnel system under the city would be linked to openings on the surface. People throw trash into these openings, and voila! - The trash is transferred to a recycling unit well away from the crowded areas of the city! It would make sure that the city would be clean and eco-friendly!

The religious centres around Chennai are often dirty, which is an insult to any God. Steps would be taken to ensure that these areas are kept as clean as possible. These steps include strict instructions to not dump trash around the vicinity and not smearing any form of paste or powders around the areas.

Trees would be planted all around the city and preventive measures would be set up for people who go around sawing off branches and cutting them down just for the money involved.

After all, if I changed the face of the city, it wouldn't be Chennai, would it? The rest of the city would be left alone, because it all makes Chennai unique! Different people, different places, different traditions... nobody would want to throw all of that away!



## Manage space well

**Vijetha Ravi. Age 14**

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Start where it all begins – Home. Charity begins at home. When each of us starts acting on what belongs to us, then what is not being worked on? It is only that first single step of deciding to act, that matters. If you have taken all of this into your heart, then I believe we are on our way. Our way to make Chennai, Our Madras, into – SingaraChennai.

The Ultimate Need of the hour is Garbage Disposal and Hygiene. Puddles all over the road with swarming mosquitoes, leftover food, plastic bags and what-not! I don't want Chennai to be famous as 'Super-Dirty-Market on the Road'!

Rainwater harvesting Programmes should be carried out in each and every household and every building. Closed Drainage systems should be strictly followed. Water used for cleaning and washing purposes can be diverted as ground water.

Next, our dear Trash! We can quite well deal that with two trash cans per 400 feet and Eru Kuzhi's in every household. Some 'ruralising' will not hurt. It's more than enough if each Chennaites takes care of only their own trash.

I shall remember my fun childhood for various things, one of them definitely being falling down numerous times while walking on the roads. If I could actually redesign Chennai, then not omitting the bumps will be a kind of a put off. Road management is necessary, especially in a country where the roads are one of the main modes of transport. Re-tarring the roads into spacious roads, well maintained, will definitely be on my list.

Zebra crossings should seriously be used and armed with cameras. Maintenance of laid roads should have a warranty period covering the quality of the road.

All roadside encroachments to be removed with compensation or adequate

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relocation. ‘No-parking areas’ should be enforced with camera supervision. Shops and malls should have proportionate parking spaces. A guideline needs to be derived with experts. Then, we are on our way to less cursing on the streets, aren’t we?

Electricity. If I could, I would make sure Chennai isn’t known for its terrible maintenance of electricity. I would feel much better, if the electric transformers were taken care of regularly and constructed in the best manner. Buildings with strong generators are a must in my Singara Chennai.

Bipolar is one word Chennai can be described with. It fascinates me how in one street, I’m surrounded by these pretty independent houses, each amazing in their own way, and in the next street I’m surrounded by the dirty houses with chipped paint on them. As an admirer of creativity, I fantasise about small independent houses with pretty flowers and fruits growing and big apartments with good traditional carving and humongous well maintained trees. If I can redesign Chennai, then I would make this fantasy a reality.

If I get to redesign Chennai, these would be in my must-do list. But another important thing I would do is collect everyone’s opinions. Otherwise Chennai may not be our Chennai. Because in the end we all love our city.

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## Use creativity, skills and resource

**Anirudh Selvam. Age 14**

The old order changeth yielding place to new. Lest one good custom should corrupt the world. These words of Tennyson tell us that even the best things in the world need to be adaptable and change in response to changes in the environment. Otherwise they cannot survive. But it must be remembered that adaptability does not mean change for the sake of change, but change in response to changes in the environment even while retaining the best features of existing systems. These are the considerations I shall keep in mind if I get the opportunity to redesign the city I live in and love, Chennai.

I have often imagined how I would go about this delicate but monumental task if I had complete freedom and unlimited resources to do it. Chennai is a city of historical and geographical importance. A natural port of commercial and economic importance, Chennai can boast of the second longest beach in the world, the Marina. It is dotted by temples, churches and monuments. The Kapleeswarar temple and the Santhome church at Mylapore, the Parthasarathy temple at Triplicane, the Marundeeswarar temple at Tiruvanmiyur, Fort St. George near the Marina, the old buildings housing the Museum at Egmore, the Raj Bhavan, the famous buildings on Mount Road including The Hindu office and Spencers plaza and the historical educational institutions all over the city are all an integral part of the hoary history of Chennai. These give Chennai its distinctive character and are to be preserved with all their vibrant vitality. In my plan, these monuments would all be renovated without damaging their uniqueness.

The beauty of Chennai is, however, marred by certain features such as unplanned and unbalanced expansion in parts, poor sewage and waste disposal facilities and roads that are unable to accommodate the fast growing vehicular traffic. These are the features that I would target in my plan.

Developing a sustainable waste management system would be my top



priority. Biotechnology has offered many viable solutions for waste disposal. I would construct an underground waste disposal facility using biotechnological methods that would relieve the residents of Perungudi and Kodungaiyur.

The next item in my plan is the road infrastructure. The city is full of roads with potholes damaging many vehicles, and increasing fuel requirements. Therefore I would turn my attention to widening the existing roads and building new and wide roads to connect remote parts of the city. T

he suburbs of the city have expanded in an unplanned manner. Many buildings have mushroomed in recent times, most of them without any basic facilities like sewerage, water supply etc. I would definitely streamline such haphazard constructional activities.

Redesigning a city like Chennai requires a combination of imagination, cultural sensitivity, engineering skill and plentiful resources. With all these I believe that energetic youngsters like me can make Chennai the best city in the world.





## What if ...?

### The Best of Summer Writing Contest

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Summer is the time to do many things for children in Chennai. The heat does not hold them up at home, for there are hundreds of hobby camps and fun events happening in this ever-buzzing city.

In the annual Summer Writing Contest hosted online at [www.yocee.in](http://www.yocee.in), children in the age group of 8 to 16 years brought out their creativity, imagination and concern for the city.

This eBook is an anthology of the best entries received for the contest hosted in three different themes - living in the moon this summer, riding in a bicycle across Chennai and redesigning the city.

Five prize winning entries along with five more best entries in each of the themes are put together in this eBook.

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