

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

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### **Who do you think you are, Hong Kong?**

Hong Kong is always moving forward, but it is also a city with a rich cultural past. We take a look at the groups of people who first called this city home.

Hong Kong is a cultural hotpot. People from all four corners of the globe make “Asia’s World City” one of the most diverse places on the planet in terms of food, fashion, and festivities.

The broth of this hotpot is a Chinese population which makes up more than 90 per cent of the city’s ethnic mix. Most of these people are of Cantonese descent, but for a small minority, their ancestry can be traced back to the territory’s earliest **inhabitants**.

Punti, Hakka, Hoklo and Tanka: these four groups of people built Hong Kong into the **bustling metropolis** that we live in today.

The Punti, translated as “original residents”, were the first to settle here. In the 11th century, the earliest **clans** took advantage of the **fertile** New Territories soil and developed a strong agricultural society. Then came the Hoklo, from Fujian, a fishing community known as the “river people”. They were followed by the “sea gypsies” (the Tanka). Famous for living almost their entire lives on the water, these boat dwellers docked their junks in and around Cheung Chau, Aberdeen and other harbours around Hong Kong.

The Hakka is the largest of the groups. They first arrived in 1688 after the lifting of the coastal **evacuation** order brought in by the Qing dynasty.

By the time the British took over in 1898, almost half of the New Territories’ population was Hakka. The construction of walled villages such as Tsang Tai Uk, and **culinary** delights like *yong tau foo* (stuffed beancurd), has ensured the Hakka influence has remained.

War and **famine** forced this mass **migration** to our shores and with it came a **blend** of customs which would shape Hong Kong’s identity.

Lion dancers first wound through the streets of Guangdong before making the leap across the Sham Chun River. Plumes of smoke billowing from hillside graves during the Ching Ming Festival are another import. The annual Cheung Chau bun scramble, a roast suckling pig to ring in the New Year, and the procession of pole-balancing children during the Tin Hau Festival are all products of the city’s forefathers.

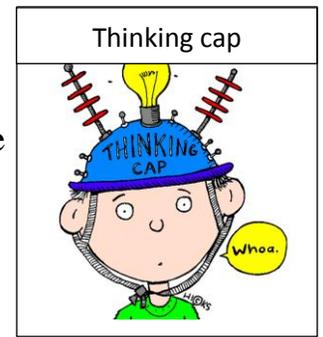
Lee Kwai-ying is Hakka. Now in her 70s, Lee keeps the traditions alive by singing folk songs on local radio.

“When I was eight, I looked after the cows in the hills,” she recalls. “I started singing because there was nothing else to do. No shops, no restaurants, nothing. I just enjoyed the scenery and sung to my farm animals.”

As shops and restaurants have sprung up all over the New Territories, however, this rural way of life has fallen by the wayside. Like so many ancient practices across the globe, tradition has struggled to hold back the tides of change.

## Questions to think about:

- Why is knowledge of history important?
- Do you think traditions are important? Why or why not? If someone from another country asked you to describe a Chinese tradition, what would it be? Why is it significant?
- Lee Kwai-ying gives us a window into her past. What is your impression? Can you imagine living like she did?
- Some people may say that Hong Kong is too concerned with the new and so called ‘development’ or progress. What would be your response?
- Do you think Hong Kong really is “Asia’s World City”? Why or why not?



### I: Vocabulary and understanding meaning

Match the meaning and/or synonym (words with a similar or the same meaning) to the words which have been highlighted in bold in the article.

Column A: Word from text	Letter	Column B: Meaning or synonym
1. inhabitants (n)		A: a group of people with a common interest or close ties
2. bustling (adj)		B: of or for cooking / to do with food
3. metropolis (n)		C: mix
4. clan (n)		D: soil or land on which it is easy to grow food or harvest crops / soil or land full of nutrients
5. fertile (adj)		E: not enough food / extreme scarcity of food
6. evacuation (n)		F: people who live in a place / residents
7. culinary (adj)		G: a large and busy city
8. famine (n)		H: lively and busy
9. migration (n)		I: act of removing groups of people away from danger
10. blend (n)		J: movement of people

**II: Usage of vocabulary:** Choose the most appropriate word from the table above to fill in the missing words of the sentences below making sure your answers are grammatically correct.

- In places with (a) \_\_\_\_\_ land, in other words, in places where it is easy to grow crops, the people rarely suffer from (b) \_\_\_\_\_. They do not go hungry.
- Post WWII saw the \_\_\_\_\_ of people from war torn countries to other parts of the globe as people sought a better life. They were forced to leave their home countries.
- Natural disasters often lead to the \_\_\_\_\_ of large groups of people to safer ground and shelters.
- New York is known as a \_\_\_\_\_. Other examples are big cities like London, Sydney etc.
- The Saturday market was \_\_\_\_\_, in other words, full of life as people came from all around to shop and enjoy the atmosphere.
- Some areas in Hong Kong are a \_\_\_\_\_ of old and new.
- In the TV show, Master Chef, many contestants try to show off their \_\_\_\_\_ skills.
- Clothes can often be a distinctive feature of a \_\_\_\_\_. For example, in Scotland, the pattern of a kilt (a man’s skirt) can tell you which group of people he belongs to.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of the small island enjoy an idyllic and relaxed life with no worries.

## Challenge of the week: Hong Kong history and trivia

**ENGLISH CORNER CAFÉ IS ALWAYS OPEN ON A TUESDAY FOR DRINKS, SNACKS, CONVERSATION & GAMES**