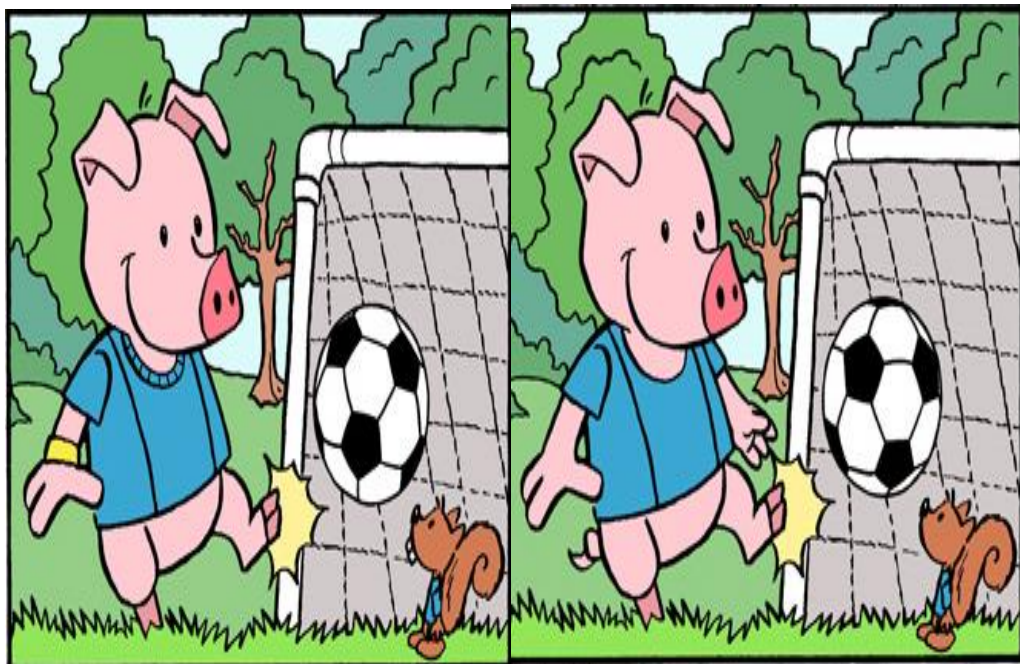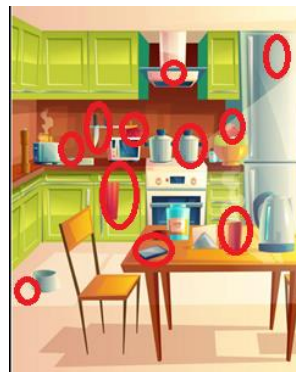Well done on getting through your tests. Now you just have to wait for the results. I'm sure you'll do ok. Don't worry. As long as you did you best. I always told my mother that I had done my best but, just between you and me[1], I think I could probably have done better if I'd tried. Sorry Mum. I'm sure she'd understand. And now, we can start getting ready for the school festival (the high school). There are only a few weeks left. How are you doing? Is everything going to plan? Don't worry. Part of the fun of the school festival is the panic that we have as we're getting ready for it. It'll be wonderful. I'm looking forward to it already.

7 differences

Last week's answer

Something you didn't know about the Mona Lisa:

1. Da Vinci started painting the Mona Lisa in 1503 and he finished it in 1519.
2. After da Vinci died, the painting was sold to King Francis I of France. It became the property[2] of the French people after the Revolution[3].
3. Napoleon Bonaparte hung the Mona Lisa in his bedroom.
4. There are 4 different versions of the Mona Lisa painted by da Vinci's students.
5. The Mona Lisa cannot be sold, but it would be worth[4] over $1 billion.
6. The lady in the painting is Lisa Gherardini. "Mona" means "lady".
7. Mona Lisa is the English name. In Italian, the painting is called *La Gioconda,* which means "the jovial[5] lady".

Laterina – Town in the Mona Lisa

An Italian historian says that he has found the town that is painted in the background of the Mona Lisa. I'm sure you have seen an image of the Mona Lisa. Have you ever looked closely at the background? Many people have had different ideas of where the scenery Leonardo da Vinci painted was, but Silvano Vinceti says that he has found it. Da Vinci painted the Mona Lisa over a number of years in several different places, so it is difficult to pin down[6]. Some people don't even agree on who the Mona Lisa is. Current thinking is that she was Lisa del Giocondo, but not everyone agrees. Silvano Vinceti looked at the background and he thinks that the bridge you can see is the Ponte Burinao, close to the town of Laterina, Italy. He worked it out by using a drone to look at various bridges in the places where people think da Vinci might have painted the picture. Only one arch[7] of the Ponte Buriano is still standing, but historical documents show that it had the right number of arches and the surrounding countryside[8] is accurate[9]. It is interesting, but da Vinci may have taken some poetic license[10] with the scene he painted and it might not be real. There is no way of knowing. The picture is still a mystery. That's one of the reasons why it is popular.

1.just between you and me ここだけの話だけど 2.property of〜の所有である 3.the French Revolution フランス革命 4.worth 価値 5.jovial 陽気な 6.pin down〜を特定する 7.arch アーチ 8.countryside 地方 9.accurate 正確 10.poetic license 詩的許容

WHOA! YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF PENNIES, GRAMPA! WHERE'D YOU GET THEM?

I PICKED MOST OF THEM OFF THE GROUND.

REALLY?

YOU'RE DARN RIGHT, I PICK UP PENNIES. IT ONLY TAKES ME ONE SECOND TO PICK UP A PENNY.

THAT'S THE EQUIVALENT OF $36 PER HOUR.

HOLY MOLEY!

An invention - velcro

Do you have shoes that tie up with shoelaces[2]? We take our shoes off so much here in Japan that it is useful to have shoes that you can put on and take off quickly. You can have slip-on[3] shoes, but my shoes do up with Velcro[4]. How does Velcro work? There are two pieces of fabric[5]. One piece has thousands of tiny hooks and the other side has thousands of tiny loops. When you put

the loops. You can pull the two pieces apart and separate the hooks and the loops. Velcro was invented by a Swiss electrical engineer[6] called George de Mestral. He discovered the idea in 1941 and he patented[7] it in 1955. He called it Velcro, which is a combination of the French words *velour* (velvet) and *crochet* (hook). He started a company called Velcro and the name became attached to the product. In the beginning he made it from cotton, but he realized that polyester and nylon were much better. Where do you think he got the idea from? He was walking his dog Milka in the Alps. Burdock seeds[8] stuck to Milka's coat and Mestral's socks. He had to pull them off. He looked at the burdock seeds closely and he realized they had lots of hooks that were hooking to Milka's coat and his socks. That gave him the idea. It took him 8 years to work out how to do it and how to mechanize[9] the process, but he managed in the end. And, thanks to him, I can do my shoes up without having to tie my laces.

World record

I know we have a lot of basketball players at school. Here are some basketball records. The record for bouncing basketballs is 326 times in 30 seconds. Corey Rich bounced 4 balls at the same time to get the record. The record for the longest time to spin a basketball on one finger is held by Joseph Odhiambo of the USA. He span a basketball for 4 hours and 15 minutes. That's crazy. I bet his finger hurt. The longest slam dunk record is held by Mike Powell and is 8.95 m. He jumped from behind the free throw line and dunked the ball. Someone's going to have to explain this one to me because the world record for the long jump is 8.96 m. Ah. Mike Powell also holds the long jump world record. He was doing a demonstration dunk. Still, I don't know how.

If you see someone without a smile today, give 'em[1] yours. – Dolly Parton

1.'em (them) 2.shoelace 靴紐 3.slip-on 着脱の容易な靴 4.velcro マジックテープ 5.fabric 布 6.electrical engineer 電気技師 7.patent 特許権をとる 8.burdock seed ゴボウの種 9.mechanize 機械化する