

KEEP TALKING
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The Definite Article presents...

Childhood

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Anyone fancy a game of hide and seek?

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Lots of great articles from our talented KT journalists
- A message from Kip
- A puzzle to test your English skills
- Tips on using "used to" and "would" for past habits
- The prize-winning article
- A glossary of typical childhood games—what are they called in English?

The Long Afternoons of Childhood

I remember when I was very young and I spent a lot of time with my friends in the garden and in the street. We were a group of about 15 – boys and girls – all living in the same street. We played a lot of games like hide and seek and dodge ball and

rode our bicycles. The afternoon was very long, but not for us, the end of the games arrived too soon every day! Without a care, without anything to worry about, only enjoying ourselves. It was a wonderful time!! Today we have a lot of

things on our mind. We work every day and we have to solve problems. Everybody is stressed. If there was the possibility to return to the past, I think that I would choose that period!!

Silvia Candotto

Kip Talking

A lot has happened to me and my family over the last three years. My father passed away three years ago, and then between September and November last year, my sister, mother and brother all died, one after the other. This has been a whole new experience for me and even though I'm not far short of 60, it almost feels like I finally have to grow up! It has also made me think a lot about happier times growing up with my brother Rob in the south of England and I realize just how privileged I was to have such a wonderful family, where I could develop in a calm, peaceful,

conflict-free, liberal and loving environment. I guess there must have been unhappy times but I honestly don't remember any of them. Life was just enormous fun. I seemed to spend most of my free time outdoors, exploring the local countryside with my little friends by bike and on foot, but never walking, just running everywhere. Sports were of huge significance: football, rugby, cricket and athletics mainly. School was a time for working hard (but not too hard) and for making friendships that have lasted right down to today, in spite of the 1000 miles that separates me from my old home town. A non-digital life was definitely simpler and I remember how natural it was to do things together as a family: learning

craft techniques from my artistic mother and helping her in the kitchen, learning so much that would serve me well in later life, or gardening with dad and being responsible for his cellar of experimental home-made wines! And then simple family holidays by the seaside when very young and, when I was a bit older, walking in the Lake District, Yorkshire, Wales and SW England. Though I knew what was expected of me and always wanted to please my mum and dad in everything I did at school and outside, I never remember feeling any pressure from them. In their very own simple, natural way they managed to create the perfect environment for a child to blossom. And for that I owe them everything.

Memories of My Grandmother



"My dolls were, without doubt, the smartest dolls of the realm."

It is well known that grandparents are special adult figures for children. For me, my grandmother, of whom I have some vivid and affectionate memories, was indeed a very special one. Granny Maria was strong, rather solitary, witty and made me laugh. But what was special to me was that she had very skilful hands and told me true stories. She made beautiful clothes for my dolls, simple but delicious meals (when we try to cook something like she did, we still say: "Granny

did it better!") and narrated episodes of her past life that taught me the history of our family. To make me happy, some afternoons Granny opened an old metal box, took some colourful fabric, folded it, cut it and sewed it. It was amazing to see how quickly such beautiful clothes came from those small pieces of cloth. My dolls were, without doubt, the smartest dolls of the "realm". They had long or short skirts, trousers, blouses... sometimes even embroidered. And

while working, Granny used to tell me about her childhood in the early years of the twentieth century, her life between and during the two World Wars and of a little girl who would become my mother. Her tales were sometimes happy or funny, sometimes sad or even very sad. Listening to her was like reading my first history book. Many years later, I wish I still had my old Granny.

Daniela Missio

"We built cars from pieces of wood... and of course the brakes were our feet, or rather our shoes. Every day, I used to come back home with injured knees. "

Changing Childhood

I was born in 1963 and when I was a child I didn't have a lot of toys. Actually, we had to invent or play with the things we had, but above all, we played a lot all together. Who remembers playing "hopscotch", "catch the flag", "What's the time Mr Wolf?" or "statues"?* All of these games helped us get to know other children and create new friendships. We played with friends outdoors, in the road, for hours. We built cars from pieces of wood, made wheels from ball-bearings and of course the brakes were our feet, or rather our shoes. Every day, I used to come back home with injured knees. These are such beautiful memories from my

childhood! I had many friends and nearly every day a new friend joined us. Nowadays, childhood has changed, the toys are made of plastic - robots, speaking monsters, remote control cars and finally video games, all these toys making children stay at home alone for hours and hours, watching TV, bored and eating a lot of junk food. We no longer see gangs of children playing in the road or in the park because their parents don't have much time for them and so they are dropped off at sports clubs or parked in front of the TV or at their grandparents' house. How many children play tennis or go dancing or swimming on

Mondays and Tuesdays and play guitar or piano on Wednesdays and Fridays while their parents finish work late and hardly ever listen to their own children. It's true too, that when I was a child mothers didn't work and could look after their children better. But these days, parents project their dreams onto their sons and daughters who are expected to be special. Children are organized like adults, more and more alone, in order to fit in with their parents or their ideas or projects.

Daniela Di Tommaso



Who had a go-kart?

Leaves in Autumn



From the age of ten months to seven years I was in infants' school, day and night. I

cried all the time. I had a teacher who loved me so much, but I cried for my parents. My mum and dad worked really hard. They

had to work shifts and couldn't take care of me. So I waited for them.

The best thing was when my father came to get me and we went to eat ice cream and play in the park. I was happy and content. In the autumn, we played with the leaves of the trees. Dad would put me on his shoulders so I could reach to the top and I would take the leaves I wanted. Afterwards we used to go to the river to feed the ducks and then

back home where dad read me books and I could draw things about them.

I always had to go back to school and wait, wait, wait... But I knew that my dad would come back again and I would be happy again!

Alla Vyedova *"Dad would put me on his shoulders so I could reach the top and I would take the leaves I wanted."*

A Funny Event from My Childhood

My father worked as a teacher when I was attending primary school and at that time he was working in a school nearby mine.

I was six years old and my parents told me that I was a hyperactive boy and in those days it was very difficult for them to control my behaviour.

One day my teacher became absolutely furious because I

was constantly distracted and was disturbing my classmates and getting them involved in what I was doing. Therefore she decided to punish me, so during the break I had to stay in a corner of the playground while my friends were playing around.

Suddenly I saw the teacher speaking to my father, who was there with his students.

She was telling him that in her class there was an annoying and disobedient child and she was pointing to me! My father looked at me but he pretended not to know anything about me and did not tell my teacher that I was his son. But when we arrived at home... try to guess what happened!

Mario Casini



**KT
Prize
Article**

Indoor Football

I have a son who's two years old. I play with him a lot and every day I remember the games of my childhood.

Now he's still too young to play all the games, but we enjoy ourselves a lot together. His favourite game is football, unfortunately not only in the garden... often

we play in the living room. We also like playing with toys for building, Lego for example. We build very high towers and he loves knocking them down.

When I was a child I played a lot with friends. I hope that my son will to and that he'll enjoy playing with friends rather than watching

too much television or playing video games.

Daniela Marinig



If you want to be a top scorer, you need to start early!

Cops and Robbers



Who played cops and robbers?

When I was young, 7 to 13 years old, it was a pleasure for me when my cousin Guido came to Forni di Sotto to visit his grandparents because we could play together, for example at a game named "cops and robbers":

This kind of game is very simple. Usually you play with other children. You make two teams, one called the "cops", who try to catch the

second team, the "robbers". The target of this second team is, obviously, not to get caught.

Cops and robbers is very similar to another game that you can play when you are a child, called "hide and seek", but with a difference: the aim is not only to find the players of the other team, but also to touch them... When the thief gets touched,

he has to go to "jail". The game is over when all the thieves have been touched and caught.

Amazing...

This was just one of the games, but when we were young we had a hundred others, not like today where the fun is only on the PC or the Play Station.

Willy Ghidina

"Sometimes we invented stories.

We dressed up like actors in a theatre:"

When I was Young

When I was a child I lived with my parents, my brother and my father's parents in a little village near Udine. Life was completely different for children in the past.

When I finished lessons I met my friends, who lived near me and all together we went to play in a courtyard. The most common games were playing

with a ball, hide-and-see, or playing cards when the weather was bad.

Sometimes we invented

stories, we dressed up in old clothes and we played like actors in a theatre. It was very funny because we spent all our time preparing and in the end we didn't have enough time to perform.

I didn't watch much television, because there was one short programme for children in the afternoon, and if I stayed with my friends, I had to do homework when I went back home. I loved reading books – fairy tales or stories – but unfortunately I couldn't buy new books very often.

I spent my holidays with my parents in Grado. We rented a flat near a beautiful little beach and

usually my cousin, who was younger than my brother and me, stayed with us. He was like another brother for me. I didn't go to the swimming pool, to the gym or to play a musical instrument, like children do nowadays. I didn't have computer, mobile phone, Play Station or other technological games, but my days were always full and lots of fun because I was never alone.

When I became a mother I tried to teach my children how important it is to keep old traditions, and to spend time with family whenever possible.

Nives Burelli



Who had a dressing up box?

Alice on Holiday

This is the story of my daughter Alice when she was 3 years old and went on holiday to her maternal grandparents. She spent her days happily playing with other children and Bella; a beautiful husky. She was the only child to have a dog like that in the whole area and so all the children were always playing with her. Bella was a really calm dog,

although Alice treated her like a soft toy: she pulled her tail, ears, lips, and she even put her fingers in her nose; but Bella always suffered all this without reacting. One day, Alice decided to wash Bella: she soaped her, gave her a shampoo, and even went to take her grandfather's toothbrush and cleaned the dog's teeth! Then... she put her grandfa-

ther's toothbrush back without telling him what she had done with his toothbrush!! Now when he knows she's coming to visit him, her grandfather hides his toothbrush first!

Marco Rossovich



Dental hygiene is important for dogs too!

Describing the past with *used to* and *would*

Used to

We can use '**used to**' to talk about past states ...

- *We used to have a huge garden when I was little.*
- *I always used to have grazed knees.*

... or to talk about repeated past actions

- *We used to go to Lignano every summer.*
- *We didn't use to play video games.*

But we only use '**used to**' is only for past states/actions that don't happen now – not for things that still happen.

Would

We can use '**would**' to talk about repeated past actions.

- *Every Saturday I would go on a long bike ride.*
- *My teachers would always say "Sit down and shut up!"*

Often either '**would**' or '**used to**' is possible. Both of these sentences are possible.

- *Every Saturday, we would go on a long bike ride.*
- *Every Saturday we used to go on a long bike ride.*

However, only '**used to**' is possible when we talk about past states.

- *I used to have very long hair when I was small. ✓*
- *I would have very long hair when I was small. ✗*

My Favourite Childhood Book

You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.

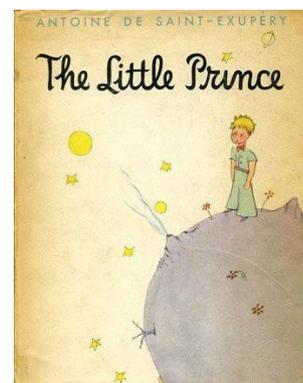
Generally speaking my favourite books told the tales of animals or distant countries that I did not know about but I wanted to find out about.

When I was nine years old, at school, I read "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint Exupéry and immediately it become "my" book for life.

The moral of the Little Prince is very simple: you have to learn to love the simple things and know how to appreciate them even when you can't see them (like the thorns of the rose). Every one of us is fragile and needs someone to love. We must learn to see with the heart how those who are near to us are unique and special. As a nine-year-old child, who

often wanted to save and protect the world I already knew that it was not perfect, but I wanted to be loved like a rose with my strengths and weaknesses. I think that people need this book to find the meaning of life – "What is essential is invisible to the eye."

Alla Vyedova



What is essential is invisible to the eye.

Summer Holidays



Fond memories of summer holidays by the sea.

When I was a child, my parents, my sister and I used to spend our summer holidays in Grado. Usually on a Saturday in July we left for Grado

with our little (but over-packed) Fiat 127. We stayed there for two weeks and every year we booked into the same nice-looking little apartment.

Every day we got up early in the morning and first of all we went for a walk on the shore, breathing the morning sea air (very healthy !!!). Then we went to the beach and enjoyed our days digging big holes in the sand, playing with balls on the beach or in the sea, playing cards under the beach umbrella, and so on! Sometimes my dad took us for a ride in a red and

yellow dinghy. It was amazing! In the evening, after dinner, we often went for a walk and we used to eat delicious ice cream. As you can see, these holidays were unpretentious, but for us they were always a lot of fun and they are still a fantastic memory of my childhood.

Dario Politti

The Tree of Life

I am sitting on the floor on a soft Persian carpet, in front of me a little old wooden trunk. Inside it black and white photos.

A man, a woman, a child, a dog... The woman is my mum and the little girl is me. When I was ill my mum used to spend a lot of time in my bedroom painting the walls. She painted the characters of famous fairy tales. I remember a green frog with a nice smiling face in a pond with pink water lilies, which will become a young prince; or an ugly little yellow duckling that will become a wonderful regal white snow, and little birds, flowers, clouds

and stars.

Looking in the same little trunk I find colour photos.



A man, a woman, a child, a cat... But I am the woman and the child is my daughter, Alice. When Alice was a little girl I used to read fairy tales every evening, before she felt asleep. In the dim light of her bedroom I recited as an

actor recites a poem. Different voices, from persuasive to shrill, different expressions with witch eyes or fairy eyes and she was swept up and fully involved in the tales. No one could distract us from that fantastic moment.

These pictures scattered on the carpet are like the leaves of a tree, the tree of my life, whose chlorophyll is Love, which keeps and will keep shining and brightening the memories in my mind and in my heart.

Monica Lucchini

"These pictures scattered on the carpet are like the leaves of a tree. The tree of my life."

Childhood—an important stage of life



Early—learning

Childhood is the first stage of person's life. For most people it is considered the richest and densest period of all human life. In this stage, in fact, the child learns a lot of communicative, affective and cognitive skills and the mental, sensory and bodily development turns out to be very important and meaningful. Although the memories are

not so sharp, childhood was a very happy period of my life that I remember with pleasure. As I grew up, the figures of my parents were fundamental in giving me a good education and setting me on the path of development.

I always liked studying and I remember that I loved going to school. I'm a friendly person and when I was younger I made a lot of friends. My best friend was Cristina, a classmate, and we often met after school to do homework and play together. We used to like going to the park and walking with her dog. I love animals, in particular cats. My first cat was called Luna and

I received it as a gift when I was 5 years old. I also liked dancing and playing the piano, which were my main hobbies during my free-time.

The thing I remember most about my childhood was the love I received from my parents; I loved being with them. We spent a lot of time together and we visited many cities on holiday. I have a great relationship with them and even now they are an integral part of my life.

"The thing I remember most about my childhood is the love I received from my parents"

Francesca Degano

The Horse's Nest

When I was a young child I spent a lot of time with my grandma. She was a fantastic grandma, and every time I met her a new adventure began. She told me a lot of stories, old stories about trolls, witches or simple cowherds. The *Horse's Nest* was one of these. Every spring, the wild horse gave birth to a colt in a large nest, and if you found it, you could pick up the

colt and bring it home. The story was true for me and when the spring returned I asked to go in search of the nest.

One morning we went into the forest, with a backpack full of ropes. The day before we had cleaned the stall, prepared fresh grass and water. The journey was long and full of emotions, in every corner there was an old abandoned nest. In the

late morning, we returned home, obviously without any horses. I believed this story for a very long time, and even now, when I walk along the same paths, I still look for the horse's nest.

Massimo Gambon



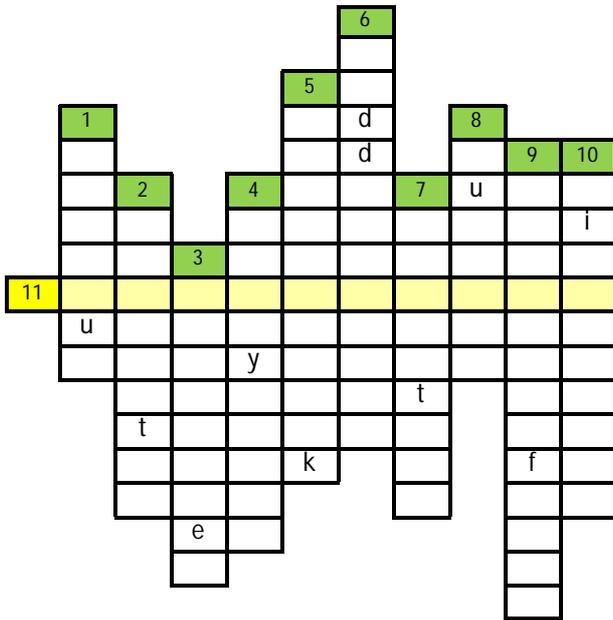
A mother horse with her foal

Glossary of childhood games

capana	=	hopscotch	=	dodge ball (USA)
guardia e ladri	=	cops and robbers	=	What's the time Mr Wolf?
nascondino	=	hide and seek	=	capture the flag or CTF (USA)
		palla prigioniera	=	
		regina reginella	=	
		rubabandiera	=	

* child's play = very easy

The KT Puzzle: It's *child's play*!



Clues

1. to put on old clothes or costumes (5, 2)
2. a game in which children draw a grid on the floor and hop and jump into the squares to pick up a stone (9)
3. a person who is a good example for a child to imitate (4, 5)
4. traditional stories which have been told to children for centuries (5, 5)
5. a game in which some children hide and another child has to look for them (4, 3, 4)
6. a shallow pool to play in in the garden (8, 4)
7. a punishment given at school where a student has to stay behind after the lessons have finished (9)
8. lumps of mud made into a round shape by a child (3, 4)
9. a wooden or metal structure for children to climb on (8, 5)
10. popular games with children nowadays (5, 5)



Who made mud pies?

My Childhood Garden

I was born and grew up in the suburbs of Udine. Opposite my house there is a big block of flats surrounded by a large garden, so I spent my childhood in this beautiful, cheerful, rowdy garden, from the age of six until I was fourteen.

There were eleven other children like me and we were a "gang" - the same age, boys and girls. We stayed together all year but the summer was our "Great Period". I have a lot of sweet memories about those past summers.

I remember that I couldn't wait to finish school so I could play with my neighbourhood gang from morning to night.

We did a lot of activities and played a lot of games.

We ran and hid in a game called *hide and seek*. One child is chosen to count until

a number corresponding to the number of other players multiplied by ten.

Then the counter had to find the children who had hidden behind the trees and bushes in the garden. In my mind I still remember the yells, the laughter, the lightheartedness.

We also rode our bikes outside and inside the garden and we sat under the trees to read a book or to take a nap. We used our imagination to take on the roles of our favourite singers and actors and we pretended to be them.

And what about our birthdays? Always a big party in the garden!! A long table of our favourite food, many gifts and always so much joy.

I was lucky to have had this



The garden—a perfect place for childhood parties

type of childhood. I really enjoyed myself and I also learned a lot from my friends. I had the opportunity to meet children with different characters and this helped me in my future relations. Some of us keep in touch, others have lost touch but I think it's normal and anyway all of us keep in our hearts the precious moments together in the garden of our childhood.

Anna Asquini