



## **'Harry Potter' star Emma Watson banned from driving for six months**

Former "Harry Potter" star Emma Watson has been banned from driving for six months after being caught speeding. The 35-year-old British actress and activist was clocked driving her blue Audi at 38 miles per hour in a 30-mph zone in Oxford, England, on the evening of July 31 last year.

She did not appear for the brief hearing at High Wycombe Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, where she was fined £1,044 (\$1,400) and disqualified from driving, according to PA Media. Shortly after Watson's case was heard, the court considered a separate speeding offense involving her former "Harry Potter" co-star, Zoë Wanamaker.

The celebrated stage actress, who played Quidditch referee Madam Hooch in the franchise's first film, received the same sentence as Watson after she was caught driving at 46 mph in a 40 mph zone in Berkshire, southeast England in August last year, PA reported. According to the news agency, both actresses had nine penalty points on their licenses before the speeding incidents occurred.

On Wednesday, District Judge Arvind Sharma endorsed three further points on their licenses for the latest offences, which triggered automatic six-month bans under UK law. CNN has reached out to Watson's representatives for comment. A representative for Wanamaker declined to comment.

The parallel rulings mark a curious convergence for two actors whose careers once intersected in the halls of Hogwarts, and who now find themselves off the road at the same time. Watson, who rose to global fame playing Hermione Granger across all eight "Harry Potter" films, has since pursued a parallel path in academia, filmmaking and women's rights advocacy. Her post-"Potter" screen work includes leading roles in "Beauty and the Beast" and Greta Gerwig's "Little Women."

Source: ['Harry Potter' star Emma Watson banned from driving for six months](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Banned :
2. Activist :
3. Clocked :
4. Hearing :
5. Magistrate :
6. Fined :
7. Disqualified :
8. Offense :
9. Celebrated :
10. Franchise :
11. Sentence :
12. Penalty :
13. Incidents :
14. Endorsed :
15. Triggered :
16. Rulings :
17. Convergence :
18. Intersected :
19. Academia :
20. Advocacy :



## **Microsoft, OpenAI and Anthropic are investing millions to train teachers how to use AI**

A group of leading tech companies is teaming up with two teachers' unions to train 400,000 kindergarten through 12th grade teachers in artificial intelligence over the next five years. The National Academy of AI Instruction, announced on Tuesday, is a \$23 million initiative backed by Microsoft, OpenAI, Anthropic, the national American Federation of Teachers and New York-based United Federation of Teachers. As part of the effort, the group says it will develop AI training curriculum for teachers that can be distributed online and at an in-person campus in New York City.

The announcement comes as schools, teachers and parents grapple with whether and how AI should be used in the classroom. Educators want to make sure students know how to use a technology that's already transforming workplaces, while teachers can use AI to automate some tasks and spend more time engaging with students. But AI also raises ethical and practical questions, which often boil down to: If kids use AI to assist with schoolwork and teachers use AI to help with lesson planning or grading papers, where is the line between advancing student learning versus hindering it?

Some schools have prohibited the use of AI in classrooms, while others have embraced it. In New York City, the education department banned the use of ChatGPT from school devices and networks in 2023, before reversing course months later and developing an AI policy lab to explore the technology's potential.

The new academy hopes to create a national model for how schools and teachers can integrate AI into their curriculum and teaching processes, without adding to the administrative work that so often burdens educators.

"AI holds tremendous promise but huge challenges—and it's our job as educators to make sure AI serves our students and society, not the other way around," AFT President Randi Weingarten said in a statement. "The academy is a place where educators and school staff will learn about AI—not just how it works, but how to use it wisely, safely and ethically."

The program will include workshops, online courses and in-person trainings designed by AI experts and educators, and instruction will begin this fall. Microsoft is set to invest \$12.5 million in the training effort over the next five years, and OpenAI will contribute \$10 million — \$2 million of which will be in in-kind resources such as computing access. Anthropic plans to invest \$500,000 in the project's first year and may spend more over time.

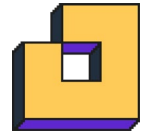
The tech companies involved also stand to benefit by gaining feedback from teachers and potentially getting their AI tools in the hands of educators and students around the country. Similar educational partnerships have been a boon to tech companies in the past — Google Chromebooks, for example, are widely used in part because of their popularity in classrooms.



Chris Lehane, chief global affairs officer at OpenAI, told CNN at the program's launch event in New York City on Tuesday that the trainings will be a mix of general information on how AI systems work and specific instruction on tools from Microsoft, OpenAI and Anthropic. There's also potential for new AI products to be developed by or in partnership with the teachers.

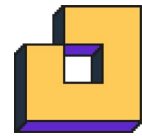
"How can we make sure that, in the K-12 context, that we're equipping those kids, those students, with the skills that they're going to need to be able to succeed in what we think of as the intelligence age?" Lehane said during the event. "And you can't do that unless it's actually given to the teachers to do that work."

Source: [Microsoft, OpenAI and Anthropic are investing millions to train teachers how to use AI](#)



## **Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!**

1. Unions :
2. Initiative :
3. Curriculum :
4. Distributed :
5. Grapple :
6. Automate :
7. Hindering :
8. Prohibited :
9. Embraced :
10. Integrate :
11. Administrative :
12. Tremendous :
13. Ethically :
14. Workshops :
15. Kind :
16. Boon :
17. Launch :
18. Equipping :
19. Succeed :
20. Intelligence :



## **Meta and AWS are teaming up to win over developers in the AI race**

For Silicon Valley giants, getting ahead in the artificial intelligence race requires more than building the biggest, most capable models; they're also competing to get third-party developers to build new applications based on their technology. Now, Meta is teaming up with Amazon's cloud computing unit, Amazon Web Services, on an initiative designed to do just that.

The program will provide six months of technical support from both companies' engineers and \$200,000 in AWS cloud computing credits each to 30 US startups looking to build AI tools on Meta's Llama AI model. The partnership is set to be unveiled at AWS Summit in New York City on Wednesday.

For Meta, the project could be a boost at a time when CEO Mark Zuckerberg is pouring enormous resources into his ambition to become a top player in the AI space. The company last month announced the creation of a new AI super intelligence team, after recruiting leading researchers away from competitors with massive pay packages. Meta also invested \$14.3 billion into AI startup Scale, which included the hiring of its founder and CEO, Alexandr Wang, and several other top employees.

And Amazon's investment, worth more than \$6 million in total, could pay off if the startups continue using AWS's service to access the AI system after the six months. While Amazon has its own large language models, AWS's AI strategy has been to help companies access any model — or multiple — along with the intense computing power needed to run them. Early-stage startups can apply to the program and will be selected later this summer based on the “potential impact of the proposed solutions and the technical ability” of their teams, AWS and Meta said in a statement.

“We have a long-standing relationship and partnership with Meta, and what we're aiming to do here with the Llama collaboration is really empower founders to build transformative AI using Llama models,” AWS Vice President and Global Head of Startups and Venture Capital Jon Jones told CNN exclusively ahead of the announcement. He added that AWS customers are already using Llama to, for example, create AI customer relationship management tools for auto dealerships or financial technology tools.

### **An open-source boost**

At the heart of the Meta-AWS partnership is a push to support Llama, a leading open-source AI model, meaning the code behind the technology is publicly available — unlike proprietary or “closed-source” models like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Anthropic's Claude.

There's an industry debate over the benefits of open versus closed-source AI models. It goes something like this: Companies on Team Closed Source say they'll retain more control over how their technology is used, and it's a whole lot easier to build a business when your rivals don't know exactly how your systems work. Team Open Source says potentially transformative AI technology should be available for anyone to use and build on to democratize its benefits.

Zuckerberg said last year that he believes “open source is necessary for a positive AI future.” He added that his model will help open source become “the industry standard,” since



third parties have free access to build on the technology. In other words, Zuckerberg would like his technology to become the leading platform for developers building chatbots, agents and other AI apps, similar to how Apple and Google's operating systems have functioned in the mobile web era.

But for startups looking to build on a large AI model, going the closed-source route can have practical benefits — when they pay to access the technology, they may also get a friendly user interface, tech support and a more personalized experience.

With their partnership, AWS and Meta hope to provide some of those same benefits to startups building on Llama. And given the significant cost of computing power for AI systems, the AWS credits could be a boon to startups that don't expect to turn a profit immediately.

"We developed Llama because we believe greater access to powerful models is essential for driving progress in AI," Ash Jhaveri, vice president of AI partnerships at Meta, said in a statement about the initiative. "Startups are some of the most creative forces in tech, and we're looking forward to seeing how they'll use Llama to push boundaries, explore new frontiers, and shape the future of AI in bold and unexpected ways."

Source: [Meta and AWS are teaming up to win over developers in the AI race](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Capable :
2. Third-party :
3. Initiative :
4. Unveiled :
5. Ambition :
6. Recruiting :
7. Competitors :
8. Early :
9. Stage :
10. Collaboration :
11. Empower :
12. Transformative:
13. Source :
14. Proprietary :
15. Democratize :
16. Standard :
17. Operating :
18. Interface :
19. Personalized :
20. Frontiers :





## **Singapore's most famous landmark is undergoing an \$8 billion expansion**

With three 650-foot-tall skyscrapers connected across the top by a boat-like skybridge — and an Instagram-famous infinity pool — Marina Bay Sands has given Singapore one of Asia's most recognizable skylines since opening in 2011. So, when the resort's original architect was invited to design a new, fourth tower for the site, his brief from the country's government was clear: Don't mess with a national symbol.

"The (Urban Redevelopment) Authority repeatedly said, 'This is our icon; our people of Singapore love this, and we cannot do anything that's going to compromise it,'" said Israeli architect Moshe Safdie, referencing the country's urban planning agency. "And that was very much on our minds, as well: How to make something that has its own identity but is very complementary."

The 87-year-old said he only entertained the idea of extending the complex's soaring skybridge to meet the fourth tower "for a few minutes." Instead, his new 55-floor skyscraper, which broke ground on Tuesday, sits apart from its famous neighbors on an adjacent plot of land. Connecting the towers would have "really compromised the existing scheme and spanning across just seemed unwise," Safdie said, comparing his new high-rise to the dot of an exclamation point. "It would be just more of the same, whereas we really wanted to create something."

The \$8-billion expansion plan is a testament to the commercial success of Marina Bay Sands, which contains a hotel, mall, convention center and one of only two licensed casinos in the southeast Asian city-state. The US hospitality giant behind the resort, Las Vegas Sands, said the property attracted 38 million visitors and 2.19 billion Singapore dollars (\$1.7 billion) in business spending last year alone.

Safdie's new tower will expand the hotel's capacity by 570 suites, while adding more luxury retail and meeting space. The architect's eponymous firm has also designed an adjoining entertainment venue for the site.

When the Massachusetts-based architect unveiled initial plans for the expansion in 2019, this 15,000-seat venue was situated on the far side of the fourth tower. But about a year ago, with progress stalled by Covid-19-related delays, Safdie proposed "flipping" the scheme, lodging the arena between the new skyscraper and the original three — and in turn extending the distance between them.

"I came to the conclusion that it just didn't feel right, and that there (wasn't) enough space between the towers," he explained. "It meant a lot of reworking of the access and transportation ... (but it) was a quantum jump improvement."

The architect nonetheless wanted to create a consistent design language for the complex. For one, the new building's boat-like roof — dubbed "Skyloop," it will host an observation deck, restaurants and public gardens, as well as cabanas and infinity pools for hotel guests — clearly nods to the original structure's iconic roof. "The buildings look related," Safdie said. "They're in the same family."



At Tuesday's groundbreaking ceremony, Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong joined Safdie on stage to mark the start of construction with a symbolic shoveling of sand. Addressing guests at the event, Wong said the new structure "will refresh our skyline."

The final design was, however, met with mixed reviews among Singaporeans online. On social media platform Reddit, the new tower was accused of being "out of place" and sticking out "like a sore thumb," while being compared to a "huge dehumidifier" or a "fourth person lurking" next to its three neighbors.

Other users were more sympathetic, suggesting that the tower will eventually "blend in naturally" with the other skyscrapers being planned in the district — which was built on 660 hectares (1,631 acres) of land reclaimed from the Singapore Strait — over the coming decades.

"When it's all said and done, people will feel it's always been there," Safdie argued. "And they will love it as much as they love this building, if not more, because I think the sum total of the two together is greater than the individual parts."

Source: [Singapore's most famous landmark is undergoing an \\$8 billion expansion](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Skyscrapers :
2. Skybridge :
3. Recognizable :
4. Redevelopment:
5. Compromise :
6. Complementary:
7. Adjacent :
8. Testament :
9. Hospitality :
10. Eponymous :
11. Adjoining :
12. Stalled :
13. Lodging :
14. Strait :
15. Consistent :
16. Dubbed :
17. Symbolic :
18. Lurking :
19. Sympathetic :
20. Reclaimed :



## **'A piece of paper doesn't make you human': Growing up with undocumented parents in America**

Kimberly's father's home in Mexico was a very small "tent looking" structure, she says. He spent most of his young life working, and never attended high school. Her mother also lived in poverty. They knew they wanted to have a family but after their own experience felt Mexico would not give their children the kind of future they deserved.

So 22 years ago, when her mother was pregnant with her older sister, the couple made a long and tiring trek across the border to the US. Born in the United States, Kimberly, who requested anonymity, and her two sisters are now educated US citizens. Their parents remain undocumented; for more than two decades, they have lived under the radar working the low-paid jobs that keep America running – as cleaners, in childcare and in construction.

But while Kimberly says her parents are safe for now, she worries that could change at any moment. She says life feels "unreal" and "like a nightmare" since US President Donald Trump began cracking down on illegal immigration, executing mass deportations since taking office in January – reigniting her lifelong fear of losing her parents. "Now that I see how Trump is handling all of this, I think maybe it won't be OK," she told CNN.

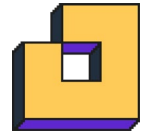
"What I see now is that we're kind of losing humanity. Nobody's thinking or nobody's perceiving you as a person. They're just perceiving you as a thing," she says. "My parents might not have papers or the legal documents to live here, but they are also human... a piece of paper doesn't make you human." Her whole life, Kimberly says she and her sisters often imagined US Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers knocking on doors and pulling families out.

"I remember as a kid being in the car and always looking back to see if there were any police cars because there would be times when people would get pulled over and they wouldn't know where the police cars came from," she told CNN. "My family and I were always on guard to make sure that we were not just driving safely, but also making sure that we look as normal as we can be."

As a child, she could tell her parents were nervous even though they tried to hide it. "It was most difficult to see how my parents reacted to the situation because as parents, you have to look like you're strong and that everything is going to be OK so that your kids aren't anxious or that they're not worried. But I could see all of my parents' emotions very clearly."

For years, her family tried to live in places with other Mexicans so they could help support each other and blend in. Her parents worked long hours, often arriving home late at night. Their employers gave them the paperwork to file taxes and Kimberly emphasizes that her parents have always contributed to the US economy by paying taxes, despite their undocumented status.

When the girls were old enough to stay alone for a few hours after school, their mother started working two jobs. "We would spend around maybe two hours before my mom came home, and then my mom would cook dinner and she would make sure that we were OK before going off to her second shift and then throughout that time my sisters and I would do homework, study," she said.



“My youngest sister was around 4 or 5 at the time, and so when she would ask when my parents are coming home, I couldn’t give her a definite answer. All I could say was she’ll be home soon, and then an hour after she would ask again and I couldn’t really give her a straight answer. All I could do is come up with games or try to put her to sleep.” Her parents thought about trying to file for green cards, but they heard that it could take years to become documented, and that they could be deported during the process – a risk they could not take with three young daughters.

Today, Kimberly says she worries her parents will be swept up in an immigration raid and sent to a detention facility – or even deported – without any notice. In those circumstances, it would be difficult for her to communicate with them and make sure they get back to Mexico safely, she says.

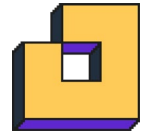
“Now when I see what’s going on with ICE, it’s exactly as I imagined it as a kid,” Kimberly said, referring to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. “My biggest worry was that my parents would feel like everything they did for us was in vain, when really it wasn’t because my sisters and I got to get a great education.” But if it happened, she would consider moving to Mexico to be with them – a reluctant reversal after living so much of the American dream that her parents had for her.

“There were many times when I was younger where my parents thought about going back to Mexico. And so my younger sisters and I would, all we could do was to cry and tell our parents that we didn’t want to go back,” she recalls.

Now a college student, she is preparing to do what she can to care for her parents, no matter what happens. “I’m a chemistry major and I’m about to start my clinical experience ... and so I hope that at some point I will be able to provide for my parents the way they provided for me.”

“I’m really grateful that I was able to get that education and build my skills. So even if we ever have to go back to Mexico, I know that I will be prepared for anything and I know how to work my way up for things now and I was able to build a lot more confidence here and so I hope that that confidence will stay with me.”

Source: [‘A piece of paper doesn’t make you human’: Growing up with undocumented parents in America](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Anonymity :
2. Undocumented:
3. Decades :
4. Deportations :
5. Reigniting :
6. Lifelong :
7. Humanity :
8. Perceiving :
9. Anxious :
10. Contributed :
11. Definite :
12. Detention :
13. Circumstances :
14. Vain :
15. Tent :
16. Reluctant :
17. Reversal :
18. Recalls :
19. Clinical :
20. Grateful :



## **World's biggest Mars rock sells for \$5.3 million at auction**

A meteorite that is the largest known piece of Mars on Earth has sold for \$5.3 million, with taxes and fees, to an anonymous bidder at a Sotheby's New York auction Wednesday. Known as NWA 16788, the meteorite weighs 54 pounds (24.5 kilograms), massive compared with most Martian meteorites, which tend to be small fragments, auction house Sotheby's said in a July 8 statement. Meteorites are what's left when a comet, asteroid or a meteoroid survives its passage through the earth's atmosphere.

Discovered in November 2023 in the remote Agadez region of Niger, NWA 16788 is a "monumental specimen" that is around 70% larger than the next biggest piece of Mars ever found on Earth, according to Sotheby's. It is also incredibly rare: only around 400 Martian meteorites have ever been found on Earth.

"NWA 16788 is a discovery of extraordinary significance — the largest Martian meteorite ever found on Earth, and the most valuable of its kind ever offered at auction," Cassandra Hatton, vice chairman of science and natural history at Sotheby's, said in the statement.

"Weathered by its journey through space and time, its immense size and unmistakable red color sets it apart as a once-in-a-generation find. This remarkable meteorite provides a tangible connection to the red planet — our celestial neighbor that has long captured the human imagination," she added.

Analysis of the meteorite's internal composition has revealed that it was probably removed from the Martian surface and blasted into space by an asteroid impact that was so powerful it turned parts of the meteorite into glass. A glassy crust can also be seen on its surface, formed as it hurtled through Earth's atmosphere, according to Sotheby's. For some, the fact that the meteorite was auctioned off rather than donated to science is cause for concern.

"It would be a shame if it disappeared into the vault of an oligarch. It belongs in a museum, where it can be studied, and where it can be enjoyed by children and families and the public at large," Steve Brusatte, a professor of paleontology and evolution at Scotland's University of Edinburgh, told CNN before the sale. But for Julia Cartwright, a planetary scientist and Independent Research Fellow in the Institute for Space/School of Physics & Astronomy at the University of Leicester, England, there is a balance to be struck.

"Ultimately, if there was no market for searching, collecting and selling meteorites, we would not have anywhere near as many in our collections — and this drives the science!" she told CNN on July 9, describing a "symbiotic relationship" between researchers and collectors. "If samples weren't being found, we would not have anywhere near as much to study, and so wouldn't know as much as we do," added Cartwright.

While she believes it would be great if this "really fabulous rock" were to be studied or displayed for the public to see, Cartwright underlined that a reference sample from the meteorite has been saved at the Purple Mountain Observatory in China.



While we don't know where the meteorite will end up, Cartwright believes that "the scientific interest will remain, and the new owner may be very interested in learning from it, so we may still gather lots of science from this," she said. In February 2021, a Martian meteorite with the planet's atmosphere entrapped in it went under the hammer at Christie's auction house. It sold for \$200,000, far above its pre-auction estimate of \$30,000-50,000.

Source: [World's biggest Mars rock sells for \\$5.3 million at auction](#)





## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Crust :
2. Anonymous :
3. Fragments :
4. Ultimately :
5. Monumental :
6. Specimen :
7. Extraordinary :
8. Weathered :
9. Tangible :
10. Celestial :
11. Composition :
12. Blasted :
13. Hurtled :
14. Oligarch :
15. Paleontology :
16. Planetary :
17. Symbiotic :
18. Observatory :
19. Entrapped :
20. Estimate :



## **China puts new restrictions on EV battery technology in latest move to consolidate dominance**

China has put export restrictions on technologies critical for producing electric vehicle batteries, in a move to consolidate its dominance in the sector that has contributed to the country's lead in the global EV race. Several technologies used to manufacture EV batteries and process lithium, a critical mineral for batteries, were added to the government's export control list.

Inclusion on the list means transferring the technologies overseas – such as through trade, investment, or technological cooperation – will require a government-issued license, according to a statement by the country's Commerce Ministry.

The new controls mirror similar restrictions introduced just three months ago on certain rare earth elements and their magnets – critical materials used not only in EV production, but also in consumer electronics and military equipment such as fighter jets. China's dominance of the rare earths supply chain has emerged as among its most potent tools in a renewed trade war with the United States.

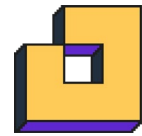
China has emerged as a leading player in the competitive global EV market, thanks in part to its ability to develop high-performance, cost-effective batteries through its comprehensive supply chain, from raw material processing to battery manufacturing. Huge numbers of car manufacturers around the world use Chinese EV batteries in their vehicles. Chinese EV battery makers accounted for at least 67% of the global market share, according to SNE Research, a market research and consultancy firm.

First proposed in January, the latest licensing requirements have cast uncertainty over Chinese EV makers' overseas expansion plans, particularly as markets like the European Union have employed tariffs on Chinese car exports to push them to set up shop there. Many Chinese battery makers also have plans to localize production in markets such as Southeast Asia and the US. The Commerce Ministry said the restrictions “aim to safeguard national economic security and development interests, and promote international economic and technological cooperation.”

Liz Lee, an associate director at Counterpoint Research, said the move “deepens the emerging geopolitical tech decoupling beyond materials to process IP (intellectual property).” She added that this could accelerate efforts by the US, EU and others to boost localization of precursor materials and metal refining capabilities.

China's CATL, the world's largest EV battery producer and a key supplier of Tesla, has plants in Germany and Hungary and has plans for a joint venture factory in Spain with Stellantis, the owner of Fiat and Chrysler. It is also licensing its technology to be used in a Ford EV battery plant under construction in Michigan. A Ford spokesperson told CNN the company is “not affected” by the new restrictions.

Meanwhile, Chinese EV giant BYD, which manufactures its own battery and surged past Tesla in 2024 sales to become the world's largest EV maker, has EV production facilities around the world, from Hungary and Thailand to Brazil. And Gotion, another major EV battery maker



in China, has plans to build a production plant in Illinois. CNN has reached out to CATL, BYD and Gotion for comment.

Analysts said the true impact of the new export controls remains uncertain, as details are still unclear. Lee noted the restrictions “appear to target upstream process technologies... rather than battery cell and module manufacturing.” Since CATL’s plants in Germany and Hungary focus on cell and module production and do not appear to replicate the restricted processes locally, the near-term effect may be limited, she said.

For BYD, which only assembles battery packs overseas and does not manufacture battery cells abroad, the controls do not appear to affect operations at this stage, Lee added. Vincent Sun, senior equity analyst at Morningstar covering China’s EV sector, said the ultimate impact would depend on how easily companies can obtain permits – something that “may take some extra time to see.”

### **China’s dominance in EV batteries**

One part of the newly announced restrictions surrounds the battery cathode production technology for the making of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, a type of lithium-ion battery that has become increasingly popular in EVs in the last five years for its lower price and greater safety. Another part focuses on the processing, refinement and extraction of lithium.

China dominates the production of LFP batteries and the processing of lithium globally, according to Fastmarkets, a United Kingdom-based research company. Last year, it held 94% market share for LFP production capacity and provided 70% of global processed lithium production. But while LFP batteries amounted to 40% of the global EV market by capacity, adoption of them is more prevalent in EVs made by Chinese manufacturers than elsewhere, according to Adamas Intelligence, a data analysis and consultancy firm focusing on critical minerals and batteries.

James Edmondson, vice president in research at IDTechEx, a research firm, told CNN that despite LFP’s lower energy density, its much lower cost, compared with its common alternative battery made of nickel, manganese, and cobalt, has made it “a staple in lower-cost vehicles” and there are plans for greater adoption by EU and US automakers. China’s dominance in LFP production means that “even for LFP produced outside of China, Chinese suppliers would still often play a part in the production of precursors to LFP cathodes,” he said.

China holds a “significant lead” in the technology itself, as shown by BYD’s “Super E-Platform” that promised a 250-mile range on just a five-minute charge, Edmondson added. The technology outperforms Tesla’s Superchargers, which take 15 minutes to deliver 200 miles. Not to be outdone, CATL followed in April with a more competitive product, an upgraded LFP battery that provides an even longer range of 320 miles with the same charging time.

Source: [China puts new restrictions on EV battery technology in latest move to consolidate dominance](#)



## **Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!**

1. Restrictions :
2. Consolidate :
3. Dominance :
4. Consultancy :
5. Cooperation :
6. Potent :
7. Comprehensive:
8. Consultancy :
9. Tariffs :
10. Localize :
11. Geopolitical :
12. Decoupling :
13. Precursor :
14. Refining :
15. Licensing :
16. Upstream :
17. Race :
18. Prevalent :
19. Staple :
20. Outperform :



## **Why has Japan set up a task force to deal with foreigners?**

Japan has worked hard to attract foreigners to boost its sluggish economy but now the perception there are too many has prompted the creation of a new task force, as competition for votes heats up ahead of Sunday's national election. The issue is on the political agenda ahead of the upper house election, in part because of a fringe party promoting "Japanese first" policies, in a nod to the nativist rhetoric of US President Donald Trump.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba launched the task force – formally named the Office for the Promotion of a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals – on Tuesday, citing "crimes or nuisance behaviors committed by some foreign nationals," as well as "inappropriate use of various" government systems.

The world's fourth-largest economy has a long history of strict immigration policies, and a strong cultural strain of isolationism. But with a rapidly aging population and plunging birth rates, Japan has been gradually opening up to foreign workers and seeking more international tourists. Pulling up the drawbridge could exacerbate the demographic crisis and jeopardize the tourism industry, experts warn. Here is what we know about the task force and why foreigners have become an election issue:

### **What will the task force do?**

Ishiba described the new office as a "command center" coordinating policies for both Japanese citizens and foreigners. Among the areas it will cover are immigration, land acquisitions by foreigners, and unpaid social insurance, Ishiba added. He pledged to "take strict action against those who do not follow the rules."

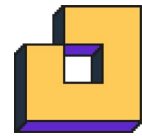
There have been no more concrete details, but the government said last month it plans to revise policies to ban tourists and foreign residents with unpaid medical bills from getting a visa or returning to the country.

### **Why are Japanese people frustrated?**

Though Japan's population of foreign residents has jumped from 2.23 million to 3.77 million over the past decade, they still only account for 3% of the total population of more than 120 million people. Much more notable is a surge in tourism over the past few years, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic.

A record 21.5 million foreign tourists visited Japan in the first half of this year, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization. Last year, Japan was the world's 8th most-visited country by tourists, according to UN Tourism, and the top in Asia.

The influx has irritated many residents, whose lives have been disrupted by tourists flocking to their neighborhoods for sightseeing, shopping or a scenic photo opportunity. It prompted authorities to temporarily block a popular view of Mount Fuji from a convenience store due to a surge in residents' complaints of overcrowding, and a hot spring resort area to warn against low water levels as visitors demanded private baths.



Some blame tourists for triggering inflation and contributing to shortages of certain supplies, including rice, Japan's most cherished staple. Others take issue with foreign residents reportedly evading public health insurance and investors snatching up properties in the country and pushing up prices. A retiree in Tokyo who used to work for a trading company told CNN that he believed foreign workers were taking Japanese people's jobs.

"They came to Japan because they couldn't make a living in their countries," said the 78-year-old man, who asked to remain anonymous due to the sensitive nature of the discussion. "Because the cultures are different, it is impossible to live together." Office worker Kouyama Nanami, 23, said she read on the news that a lot of welfare assistance goes to non-Japanese residents. "I think the aids haven't been prioritized for Japanese people," she said.

### **Is the frustration fair?**

Shunsuke Tanabe, a sociology professor at Waseda University in Tokyo, said many of the negative beliefs around migration – such as the idea of rising crime – stem from falsehoods and misleading claims from the campaign trail. "There are visibly more foreigners around; they start to assume that public safety must be getting worse, too," he told CNN.

"As a result, negative campaigns spread on social media resonate with many, leading them to think that parties promising to 'protect' society from these imagined threats are the better choice," he added. He noted that crime in Japan has declined in the past 20 years, despite an uptick in tourists and foreign residents. "There is virtually no difference between Japanese nationals and foreign nationals in terms of crime rates," he said.

In 2023, 9,726 foreigners were arrested for alleged crimes, accounting for 5.3% of total people arrested, according to a white paper by the Ministry of Justice. The figure includes both tourists and foreign residents.

### **Why is this an issue now?**

Ishiba's hand has been forced as the election campaign, entering its final stretch, has focused on anger over irresponsible foreign citizens and unruly tourists, according to political pundits. Sanseito, a minor right-wing party that has been rallying against immigrants and advancing "Japanese first" policies, has been gaining traction and media coverage.

The upstart party is far from being able to compete for a majority, but is projected to win 10 to 15 seats, which could chip away at the majority of Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The LDP and its coalition partner Komeito last year lost their majority in the lower house, for the first time in 15 years. Ishiba could face further pressure to step down if they lose the upper house this weekend.

"Anti-immigration parties such as the Sanseito are using this as an opportunity to take advantage of public misconceptions, public fears about immigration and about foreigners to take away votes from the LDP," said Jeffrey Hall, a Japanese studies lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba. While out campaigning Sunday, Sanseito Secretary General Sohei Kamiya said his party was "simply saying it's unreasonable to spend public money to hire foreigners or hand over profitable businesses" to foreigners.



“This is not discrimination or hate speech,” he said. Hall said setting up the new office could help the LDP demonstrate “they’re being tough on the issue,” though there will be a price to pay.

“If Japan becomes a society that strictly monitors foreigners to the point where they feel unwelcome, it could have a damaging effect on the ability of businesses to get the foreign workers they need,” Hall said.

### **Why does Japan need foreign workers?**

The country’s birth rate plunged to another record low of 1.15 in 2024, well below the 2.1 needed to keep a population stable in the absence of immigration, meaning that the working population will continue to shrink in decades to come. This is worsening the outlook for a Japanese economy that has already suffered stagnation since the early 1990s. To attract foreign workers, the government has been easing requirements for visas and trying to improve conditions.

The number of foreign employees hit a record high of 2.3 million last October, according to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. The government has been granting “specific skilled workers” visas to work in a range of industries from nursing and hospitality to construction and aviation, the Foreign Ministry’s website shows. During Tuesday’s announcement, Ishiba acknowledged the importance of Japan remaining open-minded.

“As Japan faces the challenges of a declining birthrate and aging population, it is essential for us to incorporate the vitality of the international community, through the acceptance of a certain number of foreign workers and the expansion of inbound tourism, to ensure a smooth transition to a growth-oriented economy,” he said.

Source: [Why has Japan set up a task force to deal with foreigners?](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Sluggish :
2. Perception :
3. Fringe :
4. Nativist :
5. Harmonious :
6. Nuisance :
7. Isolationism :
8. Exacerbate :
9. Jeopardize :
10. Acquisitions :
11. Overcrowding :
12. Inflation :
13. Falsehoods :
14. Misleading :
15. Resonate :
16. Unruly :
17. Traction :
18. Misconceptions:
19. Stagnation :
20. Vitality :





## **Can two North Korean defectors take a new K-pop boy band to global superstardom?**

In a quiet corner of Seoul's Hyuga Cafe, a warm, honey-toned space nestled inside what once served as the dormitory for K-pop megaband BTS, two young men sip iced americanos, sketching out their own dreams of superstardom. A table away, tourists murmur over lattes, unaware that they're seated beside what a new record label hopes will be the next big thing in K-pop.

Seok and Hyuk, members of the newly debuted group 1VERSE (spoken as "universe"), are modest in demeanor, almost reluctant to speak of themselves as anything more than trainees with a shot at something bigger. But their stories are unlike any other in K-pop's history. They are both North Korean defectors, turned highly trained K-pop dreamers, hoping to follow in the footsteps of K-pop megastars such as BTS and BLACKPINK who have in recent years taken K-pop global, topping US Billboard charts and amassing billion-dollar fan empires.

The 25-year-olds carved paths which speak to the resilience of individual artistry under extraordinary circumstances. As teenagers, both crossed North Korea's border into China, reuniting with family members who had fled the authoritarian regime of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Both defectors settled in South Korea, and were later discovered and recruited in 2022 by new boutique music label Singing Beetle.

This month, their first album with 1VERSE officially released. The group's debut international showcase is set for the United States, a move seen by industry observers as both bold and delicate – a new K-pop act launching in one of the world's most competitive music markets. Details of 1VERSE's American performances have yet to be revealed, representatives for Singing Beetle noted. The group consists of five members who reflect K-pop's global appeal – including Aito from Japan, Kenny from California, and Nathan from Arkansas.

"I never thought I'd be doing music in South Korea," Seok began, his voice calm but steady. "I liked music when I was in North Korea. I used to write down lyrics of songs I liked, usually about mothers, about longing. I kept those notes. I still look at them sometimes." For Hyuk, music arrived later. He came to it not through childhood fascination, but through discovery. "Back in North Korea, I didn't even have time to listen to music, and I wasn't in an environment that allowed it either," he said.

His path changed in a South Korean high school, where a teacher noticed him scribbling lyrics during class. "Why don't you try rapping?" he recalled his teacher asking. Hyuk joined a school rap club, wrote his first verses, and performed at a festival.

The experience shifted his thinking. Music went from a private curiosity to a public pursuit. Then came a conversation with Singing Beetle's CEO, Michelle Cho. She promised to help transform his hobby into a dream. "I began learning step by step," Hyuk reflected. "And began to dream of becoming an idol," the term bestowed upon K-pop celebrities.



## **Trainees' K-pop transformation**

From a young age, aspiring pop stars in South Korea typically go through a long and intense development period. Trainees follow a rigorous daily schedule that includes lessons in singing, dancing, foreign languages, and “idol etiquette.” They are regularly evaluated, often facing a competitive environment with personnel eliminations and reshuffles. Both Seok and Hyuk reference their two-and-a-half years of training not with the weariness one might expect after years of intensive choreography and vocal drills, but with affection.

“There were times when I struggled alone,” Seok began. “But when I shared those moments, our members and the staff encouraged me. That support is the most memorable part.” Like most K-pop acts their days are long. Mornings can begin before sunrise with vocal warm-ups and end with fan interactions. Rehearsals stretch late into the evening.

“I used to be in sports,” Seok said, remembering his earlier dream of becoming a soccer star in North Korea. “Now I’m pursuing something completely new. Starting from zero, going through each stage – that reality itself makes me happy.”

The group’s upcoming release includes a track titled “Shattered,” a moody anthem that builds to a moment of piercing vulnerability. In one climactic section, Seok sings: “Who’s gonna save us now?” Two months ago, he wasn’t sure he could hit the note. Now, he sings it with confidence. “That line reminded me that sometimes we all need someone’s help,” he said. “I hope the audience can feel that.”

## **Seen as artists, beyond defectors**

1VERSE’s music carries echoes of its members’ past. But it also captures the universality of youth: doubt, hope, love, ambition. Hyuk said the group’s songs are less about individual lines than collective storytelling. “Every song tells one of our stories,” he said. “Our members, our company, me and Seok. To me, the songs themselves are beautiful stories.”

Yet as they consider the paths that brought them here, neither Seok nor Hyuk want to be labeled simply as “North Korean defectors.” The term, while accurate, they say, does not encompass their creative ambitions. Nor does it acknowledge the emotional transformation they’ve undergone since arriving in Seoul, a city only about 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the border with the North, but lightyears away in terms of openness and opportunity.

“I feel like I was reborn after coming to South Korea,” Seok said. “South and North Korea are completely different. That’s why I’m able to dream a new dream here.” Hyuk added, “Sometimes fans ask, ‘Are you from North Korea?’ That means they liked us without knowing. That feels really meaningful.”

For both artists, the experience of striving for something greater resonates across borders – whether someone is from North Korea or any place where ambition is stifled. At the heart of their music lies a quest not for fame or escape, but for the delicate thrill of becoming something more than what their old lives once allowed them to be.

“There are 30,000 North Korean defectors in South Korea,” Hyuk said. “And there are many others (who aren’t defectors) who haven’t dared to dream yet. If our story gives them courage, then I think that process itself is meaningful.”



## Stepping onto the American stage

As they prepare for their US debut, both are aware of the stakes. “We’ve practiced so long,” Hyuk said. “But will fans like it?” That question haunts many idol groups. But for Seok and Hyuk, the stakes feel even higher. Lee Gyu-tag, a George Mason University Korea global affairs professor who studies pop music, said the challenges for new K-pop acts are profound.

Having members who are North Korean defectors “could help gain attention when they first debut,” Lee offered. “But the reality is that the current K-pop market is heavily influenced by major agencies, and competition is extremely fierce.”

“Storytelling and narrative are important in K-pop and that could be a strength for this group,” Lee continued. “There are still opportunities for smaller agencies to attract overseas fans. But with so many groups out there, simply having excellent performances or strong concepts may not be enough to succeed.”

1VERSE’s strategy has been to cultivate a fanbase, affectionately known as the group’s “Starz,” since the beginning of the five members’ training. The singers interact with followers on Singing Beetle’s app, b.stage, as well as on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. The group has so far reached more than 22 million likes on TikTok, approaching 700,000 followers on the platform.

From Seok and Hyuk’s perspective, each comment, like, and shared clip brings them closer to creating music alongside global artists who shaped their own tastes. Asked to name a dream collaborator, Hyuk answered first: “Post Malone. I really liked his songs growing up.” He blushed at the mention. “Just thinking about it makes me so excited.”

Seok, after a moment of reflection, named Charlie Puth. “He’s a wonderful musician,” he said. “He’s a genius.” The journey of both 1VERSE bandmates, from the cloistered world of North Korea to the hypercompetitive arena of K-pop, represents something rare: a story where survival and stardom are not opposites, but parts of the same song. Starting this summer, the world will hear their debut notes.

Source: [Can two North Korean defectors take a new K-pop boy band to global superstardom?](#)



## Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!

1. Superstardom :
2. Demeanor :
3. Defectors :
4. Amassing :
5. Resilience :
6. Authoritarian :
7. Boutique :
8. Showcase :
9. Longing :
10. Scribbling :
11. Bestowed :
12. Rigorous :
13. Etiquette :
14. Choreography :
15. Vulnerability :
16. Universality :
17. Encompass :
18. Stifled :
19. Cultivate :
20. Cloistered :



## **Making these lifestyle changes reduces chronic disease, even if you have a genetic risk**

Better health for your whole body can be broken down into just seven factors, according to a new study. Life's Simple 7 is the American Heart Association's guidelines for achieving and maintaining ideal cardiovascular health. The factors include not smoking, a nutritious diet, regular exercise, a healthy weight, optimal blood pressure, controlled blood sugar and well-managed cholesterol.

Researchers reviewed 483 studies on the impacts of maximizing Life's Simple 7 on the health of many different body systems over the course of people's lives in a meta-analysis published Wednesday in the Journal of the American Heart Association.

Maintaining ideal levels of at least three of Life's Simple 7 metrics was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, even if someone had a genetic predisposition, according to the data. And better scores across all of the factors showed benefits in many body systems beyond cardiovascular health.

"A few years ago, we learned that heart health and brain health are very closely tied. Through this review, we found that almost every organ system and bodily function also benefits from maintaining the healthy lifestyle behaviors of Life's Simple 7," said lead study author Dr. Liliana Aguayo, a research assistant professor at the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing and the Global Diabetes Research Center at Emory University in Atlanta, in a statement.

"We were pleasantly surprised to find that Life's Simple 7 at optimal levels touched every aspect of health, from head to toe. It goes well beyond just cardiovascular health to encompass whole-body health," she added.

### **It doesn't take much to see the benefit**

The researchers conducted a systemic review of studies that followed a gold standard approach, said Dr. Nour Makarem, assistant professor of epidemiology and co-leader of the Chronic Disease Unit at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in New York City. Makarem was not involved in the research. One of the most significant findings of the research is that a little change makes a big difference when it comes to lifestyle and health, Aguayo said.

The study assessed adherence to Life's Simple 7 using a scale from 0 to 14 points. Each improvement by 1 point was associated with an 11% decrease in dementia risk, a 6% decreased risk of eye disease, a 23% decreased risk of fatty liver disease, and an 11% decreased risk of chronic kidney disease, Aguayo said.

"This means that small changes, for example, moving from obesity to overweight, adding any physical activity even if below recommended levels counted as progress," she said. Many of the studies showed an adherence to Life's Simple 7 was associated with maintaining brain and lung function, vision and hearing, and teeth and muscle strength over the course of aging, according to the data.



## The essential 8 steps

The studies included in the meta-analysis used Life's Simple 7 to evaluate lifestyle behaviors, but the AHA has since updated the metrics to Life's Essential 8. The new guidelines are more comprehensive, such as including avoiding secondhand smoke, vaping and nicotine products in the not smoking factor and pointing people to the Mediterranean diet or DASH diet under the healthy eating metric, Makarem said. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension; high blood pressure is a major contributor to heart disease and stroke.

Importantly, the update added an eighth metric that recognizes the role of sleep in long-term health, he added. Good sleep means seven to nine hours a night for most adults, 10 to 16 hours for children ages 5 and younger, 9 to 12 hours for kids ages 6 to 12, and 8 to 10 hours for adolescents ages 13 to 18, according to the AHA.

The study confirms that adopting a healthy lifestyle is important to achieve optimal health as well as managing the conventional risk factors for cardiovascular disease -- weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar, Aguayo said. Small changes make a big difference. Everyday lifestyle choices have a big impact on overall health, and it's worth it to take steps toward better cardiovascular health, Aguayo said.

"The key message is that it is never too early or too late to make small, feasible changes," she said in an email. "Small improvements in diet, physical activity, smoking, or managing risk factors (weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and sugar) can have meaningful benefits, not just for heart health, but for all the body, from head to toe."

For a heart-healthy diet, Makarem recommends focusing on plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains and consuming lean proteins such as fish. She also recommended limiting processed foods, sodium and sugar-sweetened beverages. Adults should engage in 150 minutes of moderate physical activity — like walking, dancing or gardening — or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity a week, Makarem added.

Even considering how impactful small changes can be, ideal cardiovascular health is very rare -- with less than 4% of people worldwide meeting the criteria, Aguayo said. "We must do more to support young people, especially women, by making it easier, more affordable, and achievable for all to improve their cardiovascular health," she added. "Cardiovascular disease is still the number one killer of women. Supporting the heart health of young people and women is both cost-effective and the right thing to do."

Source: [Making these lifestyle changes reduces chronic disease, even if you have a genetic risk](#)



## **Fill The Words With Appropriate Meaning!**

1. Cardiovascular :
2. Nutritious :
3. Cholesterol :
4. Meta-analysis :
5. Predisposition :
6. Encompass :
7. Epidemiology :
8. Adherence :
9. Dementia :
10. Chronic :
11. Comprehensive:
12. Hypertension :
13. Adolescents :
14. Conventional :
15. Feasible :
16. Legumes :
17. Beverages :
18. Vigorous :
19. Criteria :
20. Cost-effective :



## Answer Questions Below After Reading The Texts

1. Why was actress Emma Watson banned from driving for six months?
  - A. She was using her phone while driving.
  - B. She did not have a valid license.
  - C. She was caught speeding in a 30-mph zone.**
  - D. She was involved in a minor car accident.
  - E. She refused to pay her parking tickets.
2. What is the main goal of the The National Academy of AI Instruction, backed by Microsoft, OpenAI and Anthropic?
  - A. To provide AI-powered laptops to all students.
  - B. To train 400,000 K-12 teachers in artificial intelligence.**
  - C. To develop a new AI for grading papers.
  - D. To ban the use of ChatGPT in schools.
  - E. To give students direct access to AI experts.
3. Meta is partnering with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to encourage startups to build AI tools on which of its AI models?
  - A. Claude
  - B. Llama**
  - C. ChatGPT
  - D. Scale
  - E. Bard
4. According to the architect Moshe Safdie, what was the clear instruction from the Singapore government for the design of the new fourth tower at Marina Bay Sands?
  - A. To make it the tallest tower in Asia.
  - B. To ensure it had more hotel rooms than the other three.
  - C. To connect it directly to the existing skybridge.
  - D. To not do anything that would compromise the iconic status of the original building.**
  - E. To include the country's largest casino.
5. What is the primary reason Kimberly's parents, who are undocumented, decided to come to the United States from Mexico?
  - A. To pursue higher education for themselves.
  - B. To escape the poverty in Mexico and give their future children a better life.**
  - C. To work in the construction industry.
  - D. To join other family members already living in the US.
  - E. To receive free healthcare.





6. What makes the meteorite NWA 16788 so significant?
  - A. It is the first meteorite to be sold at a Sotheby's auction.
  - B. It is made entirely of glass.
  - C. It contains fossils of Martian organisms.
  - D. It is the largest known piece of Mars ever found on Earth.**
  - E. It was discovered by a famous paleontologist.
  
7. China has put export restrictions on technologies for which type of EV battery, for which it holds 94% of the production market share?
  - A. Nickel-Manganese-Cobalt (NMC) batteries
  - B. Solid-state batteries
  - C. Lithium-ion polymer batteries
  - D. Nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) batteries
  - E. Lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries**
  
8. Why has Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba launched a new task force related to foreign nationals?
  - A. To encourage more tourists to visit Japan.
  - B. In response to the perception of too many foreigners and issues like "nuisance behaviors".**
  - C. To make it easier for foreigners to get visas.
  - D. To offer more social insurance to foreign residents.
  - E. To promote Japanese culture to the world.
  
9. The new K-pop group 1VERSE is unique in the industry because two of its members, Seok and Hyuk, share what background?
  - A. They are both from California.
  - B. They were discovered on TikTok.
  - C. They are both North Korean defectors.**
  - D. They were former members of the group BTS.
  - E. They are brothers.
  
10. The American Heart Association's "Life's Simple 7" includes several factors for ideal health. Which of the following is NOT one of them?
  - A. A nutritious diet
  - B. Regular exercise
  - C. Getting at least 10 hours of sleep per night.**
  - D. Not smoking
  - E. Maintaining a healthy weight