

## **‘Everyone on the internet is really scared of Gen Alpha’ – why is that?**

Source: [SCMP](#)

[1] Zoomers fear them. Boomers want more of them. Millennials will keep making them for the rest of the year. Born since 2010, “Generation Alpha” is the demographic successor to Gen Z – those born between 1995 and that year. Its oldest members are not quite 15, while its youngest will be conceived in the coming weeks. The parents of Generation Alpha are the millennials, born between 1981 and 1996. Finally, there are the boomers (baby boomers), born between 1950-1965, the grandparents of Generation Alpha. When the last of them are born in December 2024, they will close the largest cohort of children ever to exist on Earth. There are already concerns that these kids are not “all right”.

[2] The overwhelming majority of them have yet to graduate from primary school, and one in five aren’t even in pre-school, yet they are widely being called wild, illiterate and doomed by Internet users on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok – where alphas themselves make up a large and growing share of users. “Everyone on the internet is really scared of Gen Alpha,” says Gen Z influencer Rivata Dutta, aka Riv, whose content is popular with alphas on TikTok. “They’re like, oh my God, Gen Alpha is so weird.” Their parents and tech companies can be blamed however much we want, but that does not change the fact that we should first worry for Gen Alpha’s future.

[3] Despite decades of declining birth rates and years of hand-wringing over a pandemic baby bust, there are now more than 2 billion alpha children worldwide – more than a quarter of the population of the planet – and some 6 million in the US state of California alone.

[4] “There’s more children today than ever before, [and] more than there will be in the future,” says Mark McCrindle, the demographer who coined the name “Generation Alpha” in 2008. “We’ve hit peak children.”

[5] However, some aspects of their culture are sparking backlash. In recent months, the alphas have emerged as TikTok’s newest supervillain, a designation that has followed them into mainstream media. The previous generation has long endured the complaint that they can’t handle anything even slightly offensive. If zoomers are delicate snowflakes, alphas are the opposite – a horde of marauders chasing Drunk Elephant beauty products.

[6] Where did this reputation come from? Why is it prevalent now, when the last alphas are still not born?

[7] “As long as he keeps his grades up, I let him do what he wants, and most of the time he chooses to jump on the iPad”, said Chris Chin, father of an 8-year-old. Many Gen X (those born between 1965 and 1980) and Gen Z families also have alphas, but millennial parents have defined the genre.

[8] It begins with the sad beige baby. This aggressively dull aesthetic has dominated infant care since around Gen Alpha’s midpoint in 2017. From then on, highchairs became desaturated, while play gyms and nappy pails went from a vibrant electric green to a subtle sage. Even toy company Fisher-Price has toned down its colour palette in response to the market demand for more muted, less gendered clothes, toys and gear. It reflects not just a shift in taste, but rather a shift in our cultural perception of babies and how they should be raised. When it comes to school-age alpha children, the concern has been focused on the much-maligned “iPad kid” – a child who cannot sit through a restaurant meal or a brief ride on public transport without stimulating themselves via YouTube from a tablet in a plastic case.

[9] “The stigma is to not have our kids on screen time all the time, but I probably check my phone just as often,” says Chris Chin, 39, whose eight-year-old son Kaven is a YouTube star with half a million Gen Alpha followers.

40 [10] Similar-age viewers flock to Kaven’s channel to watch him navigate new games on online platform Roblox, experience lavish Disney holidays and unbox surprise egg toys – entertainment most teen and adult observers find confusing but inoffensive. For a curious primary school student, experts say, YouTube more often works like Wikipedia, answering questions like, where is the oldest tree on Earth? How do you defeat Shy Guy on level four of Paper Mario? What is snot made of?

45 [10] “A kid who may not have access to art lessons, which is why we have a creator who does exactly that,” says Amanda Klecker of entertainment company pocket.watch, which represents blockbuster kid creators such as Ryan’s World and Art for Kids Hub. Arts for Kids Hub will show you a really cool illustration, and the dad and the daughter will break it down side by side so our child viewer can following along and draw it, too. Amanda remarked, “We found the Internet to be the best way to reach and inform this audience.”

50 [11] That information translates to influence with busy and relatively permissive millennial parents: kids now increasingly determine what their families buy, where they go on holiday and even what they watch on television, studies show. “Our kids these days are so intelligent,” says Anges Hsu of Hello Wonderful, whose six-year-old has read hundreds of digital books, despite growing up in a home filled with physical ones. “This is going to be one of the smartest generations of our lifetime.”

55 [12] In spite of some stellar examples, not everyone is aligned with that view. Illiteracy is among the most frequent critiques levelled against Gen Alpha online. It is also inherently true of a demographic whose median age is six-and-a-half. In California, children are expected to be able to read around December of first grade, meaning most alphas should have been literate by New Year’s Day. Yet thousands are still struggling, this has become a painful reminder of a pandemic most teens and adults would prefer to move  
60 past.

[13] Alphas “are some of the hardest-hit kids when it comes to reading”, says Anderson-Byrd, director of the California Reading and Literature Project. “Only 43 per cent of our students are on grade level in California.” Reading is essential for all academic work from late primary school forward, she adds. Yet even English teachers are not trained to teach phonics and other remedial skills beyond the early grades.  
65 That has left fourth-graders who were somewhat behind when the pandemic hit in 2020 still functionally illiterate in eighth grade. “Teachers are complaining they have 14-year-olds who can’t read,” Anderson-Byrd says.

[14] Those complaints are echoed on TikTok and Reddit, where teachers cite lack of reading skills as one of the reasons they are leaving the profession. US librarians take a somewhat brighter view, noting that  
70 while circulation is still down since the pandemic, digital loans of popular series such as Dogman, Diary of a Wimpy Kid and Desmond Cole Ghost Patrol remain strong. “The e-books and audiobooks, those go like hot cakes,” says Grisel Oquendo, children’s fiction selector for the LA County Library system. Younger alphas in the US are also likely to benefit from the nationwide shift away from balanced literacy and towards the phonics-based science of reading. For the older half of the generation, that move may be too  
75 late.

Answer the following questions using the content given from the article

1. Fill in the following information chart about the different generations

<u>Chronological Order</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Born between</u>
1	Baby boomers (boomers)	(i)
2	(ii)	1981-1996
3	Generation Z (zoomers)	(iii)
4	(iv)	(v)

2. Determine if the following statements are true, false or not given

- Gen Alpha is feared by everyone
- There are still more Gen Alpha children being born right now
- There are more Generation Alpha children than Generation Z children
- All generation alpha children are very bright.

3. Who do 'them' (line 8) refer to?

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4. What is the use of listing several complaints of people towards Gen Alpha children in line 9?

- To show that Gen Alpha children are prevalent on the internet
- To show that Gen Alpha children considered problematic by others
- To show that Gen Alpha's parents did not do a good job of parenting them
- To show that tech companies failed Gen Alpha

5. Fill in the following blanks about the population of gen alpha

Worldwide population: \_\_\_\_\_

Population in California: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why are zoomers described as 'delicate snowflakes' as seen in line 21?

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7. What does Gen Alpha being the 'opposite' to Generation Z suggest about their behaviour on the Internet?

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8. Below is a summary of paragraph 8, on each there is one mistake, find it and correct it

Baby items such as highchairs, were originally made in boring colours. Starting from Generation Z, businesses making products for children changed to a more vibrant colour palette, in part to accommodate market demand. However, this is a reflection on the change of social perception of children. As Generation Alpha grows up, some of them become ignorant to their tablets and phones, often being able to put them down for short periods of time.

9. Find a word in paragraph 8 that has a similar meaning to 'arouse'

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10. What does 'much-maligned' suggest about society's view on the iPad kid?

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11. What does stigma (paragraph 9) mean?

- A. Feedback
- B. Positive comments
- C. Guideline
- D. Negative impression

12. Complete the following summary of the content of paragraph 10

Why Gen Alpha kids flock to Kaven's channel?

- Watch him play games on \_\_\_\_\_
- Watch him go on holidays
- Watch him \_\_\_\_\_ surprise egg toys

What do other people think about Kaven's content?

- Harmful / Harmless (Choose the appropriate one)
- Baffling

The role of YouTube

- Youtube is often considered by Gen Alpha to fit in a similar role as \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is something that children do not have increasing control over?

- A. Where their family goes on trip in summer
  - B. Which computer their parents should buy
  - C. Who they want to friends with
  - D. What Netflix show the family watches at night
14. Why are children given increasing control over their family's decision?

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15. Anges Hsu said "Our kids today are so intelligent", find a piece of evidence in the text to support her statement.

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16. What does stellar (line 55) mean?

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17. Why is it important for children to get a good understanding of reading early in their studies?

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18. According to paragraph 14, why are teachers leaving their jobs?

- A. Children lack reading skills
- B. Parents become increasingly annoying to deal with
- C. School administrators are not helpful
- D. The pressure of teaching is too high

(last 2 questions on next page)

19. Who is optimistic about Gen Alpha's reading capabilities and for what reason?

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20. What does "that move might be too late" imply about our ability to address the reading abilities of old Gen Alpha children?

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