



# The Evolution of Daily Necessities

日常用品進化論 1：原來發明筷子，不是為了吃飯！

**Author:** Wu I Jung **Illustrator:** Yunin Tsai **Publisher:** Mandarin Daily News

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Daily necessities reflect human society's way of life, cultural background, and historical evolution. For instance, skirts were not exclusively worn by women in ancient times; Roman soldiers favored short skirts because they were breathable and allowed for easy movement. Through a series of engaging stories, this book invites readers to uncover the hidden history of everyday objects.

From the author of *The Fascinating Stories Behind Modern European and American History and Uncovering Taiwan's Past*, Wu I-Jung presents his first illustrated historical book tailored specifically for middle and elementary school students. Focusing on the history of "everyday items," Wu emphasizes that these objects not only make our lives more convenient but also embody our cultural practices and ways of living.



Writer **Wu I Jung**

Wu I Jung is a seasoned junior high school history teacher and the acclaimed author of several popular history books. Her notable works include *The Fascinating Stories Behind Modern European and American History* and *Uncovering Taiwan's Past*, which bring historical events to life with clarity and charm, making them accessible to readers of all ages.



Illustrator **Yunin Tsai**

Yunin Tsai is a freelance illustrator and graphic designer with extensive experience. Tsai has designed textbooks, magazines and advertisements.

# Connecting with Readers Through Everyday Life

by Peng Guan-Lun

When it comes to encouraging reading, I often tell parents and teachers to start with children's interests, using their natural curiosities as a gateway to introduce relevant books. But the reality is that many children seem disinterested in everything and struggle to articulate what they like, which can be frustrating. However, after reading Wu I Jung's *The Evolution of Daily Necessities 1: It Turns Out That Chopsticks Were Not Invented for Eating!*, everything clicked into place.

Even if children seem uninterested in specific topics, they still engage in basic activities like eating, sleeping, dressing,

and wearing shoes. These everyday routines can serve as an entry point to make reading more relatable and enjoyable.

*This book taps into the history of everyday objects, elevates the rituals of daily life, and inspires reading—all while offering plenty of entertaining stories for you to discover.*

For example, do you know where chopsticks originated—or that they weren't originally invented for eating? Or why Taiwanese people use wooden or bamboo chopsticks while in Korea, metal chopsticks are the norm? Why are Japanese chopsticks pointed at the ends? I posed these questions during dinner, and it sparked a lively conversation at the table. This provided an immediate and fun way to connect reading with everyday life,

giving parents plenty to discuss with their children.

The book also overturns preconceived notions about familiar objects, like high heels. If you've ever thought of high heels as shoes for women, you might be surprised to learn they were originally invented as military gear for men. In 16th-century Europe, the height of one's heel symbolized noble status—the higher the heel, the higher the rank, for both men and women. How did high heels become associated only with women? You'll have to read the book to find out!

*The Evolution of Daily Necessities* is genuinely fascinating, revealing things I never knew and filled with delightful insights. Why are piggy banks shaped like pigs? Everyday items that seem mundane have rich historical contexts, and Wu Yi-

Rong brings them to life with engaging stories.

Although the book is aimed at children, I believe adults should read it first. That way, they can spark conversations with their kids and impress them by saying, "Wow, you're so knowledgeable!" This will naturally pique children's curiosity and motivate them to explore the book on their own.

This book taps into the history of everyday objects, elevates the rituals of daily life, and inspires reading—all while offering plenty of entertaining stories for you to discover.

*Peng Guan-Lun is an editor, library director, and author of The Healing Library.*

### Before We Begin Introducing History's Mini-Celebrities

What we wear reflects both current trends and our personal style. Hats express our personality, glasses open a window to the world, and skirts can convey our elegance and confidence. But each item is so much more; behind every piece lies a rich story of its history and evolution.



## When Did Hats Begin to Appear?



Hats reflect diverse styles. Initially worn to block sunlight or keep heads warm, over time they began to signify class, gender, occupation, and other identities. Hats even became integral to rituals. For nursing students, a teacher's placement of a white cap at a ceremony symbolizes a vital transition.

Do not underestimate the hat! It's no mere accessory. Even the simple act of putting it on or taking it off carries rich meaning. Now, let's explore the fascinating story of how hats have transformed over time.

## European Mummy: The Iceman Ötzi's Bear-Skinned Hat

Near the Ötztal Alps in Italy, archaeologists discovered the world's oldest known mummy called "Ötzi the Iceman." He was dressed in a three-layered outfit made of sheepskin, deerskin, and grass. He wore a hat made of bearskin, fastened under his chin with a leather strap. This hat is the oldest known hat in human history.



30  
th c. BC

## The Peculiar British Law: Common Men Wearing Flat Caps

The British might be the most hat-loving people in the world. In 1571, the British government passed a law to boost the wool trade, requiring all men over the age of six (except for nobility) to wear wool caps on Sundays and holidays. Those who did not comply would be fined.

As a result, this flat cap became a symbol of the common people. Today, it has evolved into a personal fashion statement and is commonly known as the "flat cap" or "newsboy cap."



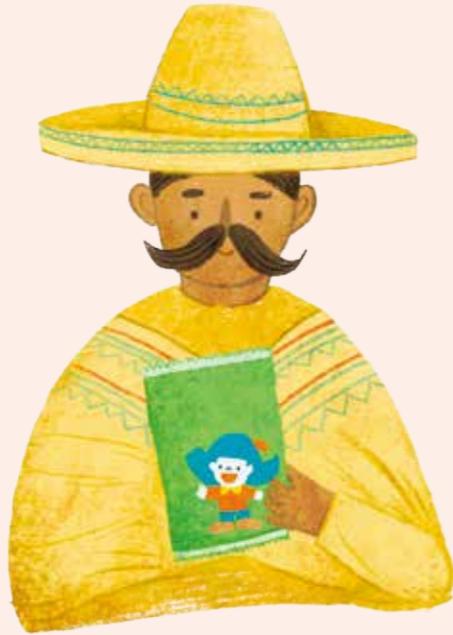
16  
th c.

## An Ancient Roman Slave Wears A Pileus Hat to Show His Freedom

In ancient Rome, a small brimless felt hat called the pileus symbolized the freedom a slave had won. Before being freed, there was a special ceremony in which the magistrate would touch the slave's head with a baton and loudly declare his liberation. From that moment on, the slave would wear the hat to show that he was free.

2  
nd c. BC





16  
th c.

## People from Mexico Bake Palm Leaves to Make a **Sombrero**

In addition to the British, another hat-loving people are the Mexicans. The large sombrero, cherished by Mexicans, was invented by the indigenous people during the

Spanish occupation of Mexico. Horse riders wore them in the fight against the Spanish, and it later became a symbol of Mexico.

This broad hat is created from woven palm leaves. Its wide brim and tall crown block the scorching tropical sun. You've probably seen this hat before: it appears on the front of Taiwan's national snack "Kuai Kuai" and has been there since it officially launched in 1966. That summer, Taiwan went crazy for the Olympics, which were held in Mexico. As a result, the snack's packaging features a child wearing a sombrero.



17  
th c.

## Dutch Women Adore This **White Lace Bonnet**

This charming white bonnet with two small "ears" is the most eye-catching accessory in traditional Dutch women's attire. Made of cotton and decorated with lace-like trim, this bonnet is worn by women during special occasions or festivals, while simpler hats are used for everyday wear.

## The Queen Loves Hats—And **Wears Them With Style**

20  
th c.

In class-conscious Britain, hats have long reflected social status. The royal family asks experts to design unique hats for each of its members at every public event.

Queen Elizabeth II was especially known for her love of hats. According to official reports from the British media, the Queen owned at least 5,000 hats. When she attended events, she paired her hats with different outfits. Whenever the Queen made an appearance, her hat was always the center of attention.

